THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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LAKSHYA SEN
The young star handed India 1-0 lead after beating world No 5 Anthony Sinisuka Ginting in a gruelling three games 8-21 21-17 21-16

SATWIKSAIRAJ RANKIREDDY AND CHIRAG SHETTY
Rankireddy and Chirag were in their immaculate best during the doubles match against the experienced pair of Mohammad Ahsan and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo, beating them 18-21 23-21 21-19. They saved four match points in the second game before clinching the third 21-19. Gave India 2-0 advantage before second singles match

KIDAMBI SRIKANTH
The experienced player controlled the game to beat Asian Games gold medallist Jonatan Christie 21-15 23-21 to give India victory

THOMAS ARRIVES IN SHUTTLE

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @ Chennai

THE Impact Arena in Bangkok has played host to some of the biggest personalities and bands in the world of music. Think Roger Waters, Coldplay, Beyonce, BTS and Britney Spears. On Sunday, it was jiving, heaving and grooving to the humble *dhol*. While the Indian fans in the stands were cranking up the noise in the arena, the Indian players tasked with rewriting history went about it in a calm, unhurried manner.

When the weight of 73-years of history finally lifted at about 3.15 PM IST on Sunday, it had a certain authority to it. Kidambi Srikanth, who had been invincible all week, stretched his record to 6-0. By the time he saw off Indonesia's Jonatan Christie in straight games and threw his racquet on the green turf before being enveloped by his onrushing teammates, the story had already started to sink in. "India are Thomas Cup champions for the first time ever".

Of course, like every story, there are multiple protagonists who made this dream a reality. Lakshya Sen who took down Olympic bronze medallist Anthony Ginting on the first match on Sunday. HS Prannoy, a controversial direct selection that set the tongues wagging even before the team had booked their flight to the Thai capital, keeping his cool on multiple occasions. Srikanth himself bringing his zen-like focus game after game, match after match while quietly guiding the side's many young players. The doubles stars, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who kept chipping away even when it looked the effort wasn't translating into results.

The biggest factor, though, was the side's mentality. Heads never dropped, shoulders never drooped and the belief never wavered as all of them embraced all of sport's only true currency. Giving up was not an option. In modern sporting parlance, it's known as 'mamba mentality' and that's what this team embraced throughout the week. The proof of this is in the pudding. Lakshya suffering from food poisoning yet answering the call of duty on the very first day of the tournament and saving his best for last. This team lost the opening singles rubber on back-to-back days in the quarterfinals and semifinals. This team won a deciding rubber twice on back-to-back days against Malaysia and Denmark to enter the final. This side was 21 points away from not qualifying for the final. In the end, though, this side became only the second in the meet's history to win the event after failing to top the group phase.

Mentality monsters from start to finish in the backdrop of *dhols*.

FULL COVERAGE: P5, 11

A jubilant Indian team mobs Kidambi Srikanth who won the third match against Indonesia to seal the gold in Thomas Cup in Bangkok | AP

Behind the scenes of champions

BONDING EXERCISE
The lead players were very secure about their place in the side. Coach U Vimal Kumar spoke about this in the post-match conference and it was in evidence when the side's youngest player, Priyanshu Rajawat, received the Thomas Cup on the podium.

TRIUMPH OF THE COLLECTIVE
When HS Prannoy went down clutching his ankle in the semifinals, it looked like panic stations. However, he fought through the pain barrier for the greater good. If anything defines this team, it's this. It's a bunch of individuals who make this team greater than the sum of their parts.

> **This might sound a little dramatic. But you know, when I was in Korea for the Korea Masters, and the following week we had selection trials... immediately after those trials, when the team got announced, we created a (WhatsApp) group titled 'We'll Bring It Home', or something like that.** — Kidambi Srikanth, on the belief in this team

THE DEPTH
This time last year, Lakshya Sen was No 23 in the world. A fantastic last year, including winning a bronze at the Worlds, has helped him become the lead player. This gave both Prannoy and Srikanth winnable matches coming in as the 2nd and 3rd singles players. End result? They returned a record of 11-0.

ROAD TO GOLD

Group Stage
bt Germany 5-0
bt Canada 5-0
lost to Chinese Taipei 2-3

Knockouts
Quarterfinals
bt Malaysia 3-2
Semifinals
bt Denmark 3-2
Final
bt Indonesia 3-0

- Lakshya Sen bt Anthony Ginting 8-21, 21-17, 21-16.
- Satwiksairaj Rankireddy/ Chirag Shetty bt Mohammad Ahsan/ Kevin Sanjaya 18-21, 23-21, 21-19.
- Kidambi Srikanth bt Jonatan Christie 21-15, 23-21.

One family, one ticket rule in sweeping Cong reforms

50% posts to the U-50, and social re-engineering by giving half the party positions to weaker sections part of the Udaipur Declaration

RAJESH ASNANI @ Udaipur

THE Congress on Sunday adopted its Udaipur Nav Sankalp Declaration at the end of its chintan shivir, drawing up a comprehensive roadmap for wide-ranging internal reforms to make the party battle-ready for all upcoming elections till the Lok Sabha polls in 2024.

A task force will be set up in the next 2-3 days to implement the decisions, Congress president Sonia Gandhi announced in her concluding address. Also, an advisory committee of Congress Working Committee (CWC) members headed by Sonia will be formed to deliberate on political issues.

Earlier, the CWC vetted the reports of six dedicated panels on organisational, political, economic, agricultural, social justice and youth-related issues, which formed the crux of the Udaipur Declaration.

Among the approved proposals was the 'one family, one ticket' rule, with exemption for big hitters in the party for five years, which was seen as tailor-made for Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. As reported in these columns over the last two days, 50% representation to those below 50 years of age across the party organisation, and 50% in-house representation to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and minorities at all levels were approved. Also, no one can hold a party position for more than five years.

Other important elements of the declaration include a new a Mandal Samiti to strengthen the organisation, legally guaranteed MSP for all 23 crops, a farm debt relief commission, a return to pushing the public sector in the post-liberalisation era and demand for private sector quota in jobs. Also, Congress will set up three new departments — public insight, election management and national training.

The party plans to start a National Training Institute to train the cadre with its policies, ideology, and vision. It will also set up a monitoring wing to keep a close eye on the performance of all party officials.

One proposal the CWC rejected was on creating a Congress Parliamentary Board. It instead decided to set up a political affairs committee in each state and at the central level.

Prominent among the mass action programmes the party conceived was a nationwide Kashmir to Kanniyakumari 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' from Gandhi Jayanti day on October 2 this year. "It will aim to preserve the foundational values of our Constitution that are under assault and will highlight the day-to-day concerns of our people," Sonia said.

She also announced the start of a mass contact programme, called Jan Jagran Abhiyan, at the district level from June 15. Sonia sought to energise the delegates, saying, "we will overcome — that is our determination, that's our sankalp."

Sonia Gandhi addresses the concluding session of the shivir in Udaipur | PTI

Retirement age for party lawmakers

From the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, half of Congress tickets will be given to those below 50 years of age. Also a retirement age will be fixed for those in Parliament, state legislatures and other elected posts

CM Basavaraj Bommai inaugurates renovated Dharavati Hanuman temple near Hubballi on Sunday | DHEMANTH

Cabinet expansion after approval from high command, says Bommai

ARUNKUMAR HURALIMATH @ Hubballi

CHIEF Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday said he will get in touch with the BJP high command in New Delhi over phone in a day or two and only after receiving directions from the top leaders, the Cabinet expansion will take place.

At Hubballi Airport on Sunday, he said the state government is currently busy with the Rajya Sabha and Legislative Council polls which are due in June. The BJP core committee meeting on Saturday discussed the party's strategy for the two elections, he added.

He said the party high command is keen on Cabinet expansion. On criticism from Opposition parties on various issues, Bommai said, "All issues like hijab, azaan and halal have been addressed legally and cordially. The issues were resolved as per directions from courts. Giving efficient and pro-people administration is more important."

On speculation that the party would give an MLC ticket to former chief minister BS Yediyurappa's son BY Vijayendra and then induct him into the ministry, Bommai refused to comment, saying the high command will take a decision.

Later inaugurating the renovated Dharavati Hanuman Temple at Gokula village on the outskirts of Hubballi, along with Union minister Pralhad Joshi, he said Lord Hanuman was born in Karnataka.

CONTINUED ON: P4

JAB-O-METER
TAKE YOUR SHOT
May 14 **13,47,702 doses**
May 15 **2,84,791 doses**
TOTAL DOSES 1,91,25,72,031

NATION WIDE	MAY 14	MAY 15
Fresh cases	2,858	2,487
Recoveries	3,355	2,878
Deaths	11	13

KARNATAKA	MAY 14	MAY 15
Fresh cases	103	126
Recoveries	179	103
Deaths	0	0

Schools to reopen today, NEP will be rolled out

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

SCHOOLS across the state are all set to reopen on Monday, which is early, as the government is launching a learning recovery programme to help students this year. This will be the first time in the last two years that students are starting their academic year with offline classes.

The government is also rolling out the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 this year, with 20,000 anganwadis starting the new curriculum.

Primary and Secondary Education Minister BC Nagesh on Sunday said the early start is to help students compensate for the setback in learning caused by pandemic. Educators have been given adequate training in both learning recovery programme and the new curriculum, he added.

NEP is not for all students, as it is being rolled out only in certain areas and for children in anganwadis. The new curriculum will begin only a month after schools reopen, in June. **P4**

FATAL TOUCH

35-yr-old man electrocuted at bus stand in Hebbal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A MAN who was waiting for a bus at the Hebbal bus stand was electrocuted on Saturday night, making it the second such incident in a month.

The deceased, whose identity is yet to be established and is said to be aged around 35, had come to the bus stop alone around 8.30 pm. As it was raining, he was taking shelter at the bus stand. He touched the metal rod of an advertising hoarding and was electrocuted. Passersby, who noticed him getting the shock, alerted Hebbal police.

The body was shifted to MS Ramaiah Hospital for postmortem. No ID cards or documents were found on him. A case of negligence has been filed against Bescom, an officer said. **P3**

Delivery apps face shortage of gig workers

DONNA EVA @ Bengaluru

WITH Swiggy's Genie and Supr Daily temporarily unavailable, citing worker shortage across the state, the reasons being attributed to it are many, including rising fuel prices, inability to keep up with shorter delivery time demands and lack of regular work. Another major reason is the ongoing harvest season.

Rohit Rathi, founder of KarmaLife, a platform which provides financial schemes for gig workers, told *TNIE*, "According to a research by us, the shortage is cyclical, with workers usually travelling back to their hometowns for the harvest season and companies finding excess workers around the festive season when money is short for workers. But now with other pressures mounting, it does not seem like they will return to Bengaluru," he said. Post-pandemic, the change is more acute, leading to platforms like Swiggy shutting down some of its services, he said.

"The need to return home for the harvest season might also be fuelled by rising petrol and diesel costs. Especially when they are not paid on a monthly basis, it becomes less of an incentive when fuel prices often exceed their payouts," he added. **P3**

> **The need to return home for the harvest season might also be fuelled by rising petrol and diesel costs. Especially when they are not paid on a monthly basis, it becomes less of an incentive**
>
> Rohit Rathi, founder of KarmaLife

ALMANAC TODAY
• **Monday:** 16/05/2022 • **Year:** Shubhakrutha • **Ayana:** Uttharayana
• **Ritu:** Vasantha • **Masa:** Vaishaka • **Paksha:** Shukla • **Tithi:** Paurnami 9.55 am
• **Nakshatra:** Vishaka 1.53 pm • Moon in Dhanur Rashi • **Rahukaala:** 07:30 am to 09:00 am
• **Gulikakala:** 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm • **Yamaganda:** 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER
MIN 21°C | MAX 28°C
FORECAST
Thunderstorms. Overcast

Sunrise 5.54 am
Sunset 6.38 pm
Moonrise 6.58 pm
Moonset 5.48 am

Red tapism stalls tiger reserve tag for MM Hills

Forest dept keen to use area for tiger relocation

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

THE state government continues to drag its feet in declaring MM Hills Wildlife Sanctuary a tiger reserve, said state conservationists and Karnataka forest department officials.

They state that even as the government has been sending the file back at each cabinet meeting, stating that clarification and more details are required, the actual reason is the government is not keen as the Assembly election is approaching, alleged a senior forest department official, on condition of anonymity.

"The government is delaying the announcement keeping in mind the voters. The government will be unable to announce any developmental schemes or projects to be undertaken in the area, if it is declared a tiger reserve. Also, since the pressure from religious groups is mounting, declaring the sanctuary a reserve will also affect the entry of people to the Male Mahadeshwara temple. The state government does not want to go to the Centre for clearance for every project at this point of time. So the file is once again being shelved," the official said.

The proposal to declare it as the sixth reserve was given a nod in January when it was to get the cabinet nod. Following which, it is still kept on hold. NTCA officials state that other states are racing ahead in getting more forests declared as tiger reserves, as it draws central government funds and protection status, but in case of Karnataka, the government is disinclined.

"We want the area to be declared a reserve as it has the potential. Also when the tiger population is growing, and the department is keen on utilising the area for relocating tigers here from conflict prone areas. The proposal has been approved by the state board for wildlife and the NTCA is also keen," the official said.

Male Mahadeshwara Hills (MM Hills) was declared as a wildlife sanctuary in 2013 and is spread across 906 sq km.

"Another reason why the government is dragging its feet is because NTCA has suggested to include a portion of Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary also into it while declaring the tiger reserve. The state government is not keen as its plan on development at Cauvery will face impediments including the Mekedatu project," the official said.

01

Braving the rain, thousands of runner participate in six different races at the 14th edition of the TCS World 10K Run in Bengaluru on Sunday.

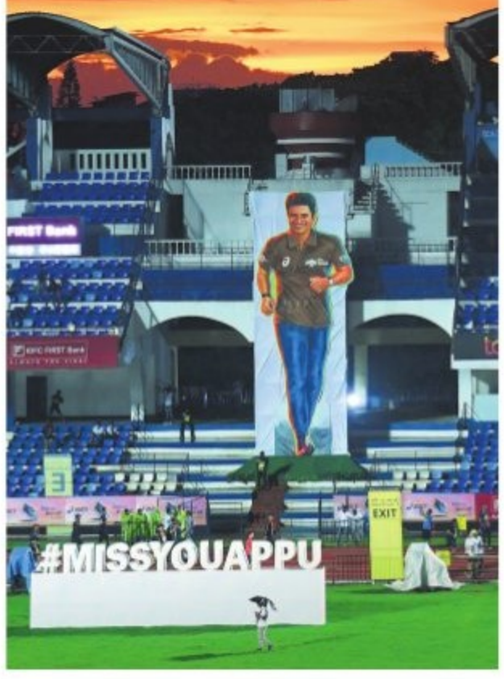
02

A huge cutout of late "Power Star" Puneeth Rajkumar at Kanteerava Stadium

03

(from left) Kenyans Irene Cheptai, Joyce Tele and Helen Obiri race to the finish line | PICS: SHRIRAM BN

CITY WAKES UP, RUNS



Nirmala inspects Kalena Agrahara Lake works

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

UNION Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** on Sunday morning inspected the developmental works at Kalena Agrahara Lake.

She also interacted with the locals and Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) officials.

The developmental works of the lake had started in 2017, and even then she had inspected the ongoing works. On Sunday, she planted a sapling at the site and took stock of the situation from citizens and officials.

The total cost of the project for the development, executed by BBMP, is Rs 3 crore, which includes MLAD scheme funds and state government grants. The lake is spread across 7.30 acres in survey number 43 in Kalena Agrahara village, Begur ward in Bommanahalli zone.

According to BBMP officials, they have cleared the silt from the water body and increasing the lake's water holding capacity, sewage lines have been laid, the lake boundary has been fenced, air excursions have been developed, the inlet of the lake have been cleared, toilet facility has been established, and a 150 KLD sewage water treatment plant has been set up.

EXPRESS READ

RSS founder's speech in textbooks flayed

Bengaluru: The All-India Democratic Students Organisation (AIDSO) has condemned the government's move on introducing a speech of RSS founder KB Hedgewar in Class 10 textbooks. The student organisation said that political parties are driven by their own agendas. "The founders of our Renaissance movement and many great Freedom fighters had hoped for democratic, scientific and secular education," said AIDSO state secretary Ajay Kamath.

Tomato prices red hot at ₹90

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE price of one of kitchen's most essential items and prime cooking ingredient - tomatoes - has shot up to Rs 90 per kilo in the retail market.

Even as the rates at Hopcoms outlets on Sunday was Rs 75, in retail, the prices for Nati and farm ranged from Rs 80-90, also depending upon the size.

Worried with the steep rise in prices as the Hopcoms officials said that they will look into it as to how the prices could be scaled down and controlled, retailers said that since they are getting at higher prices and with difficulty they are unable to do anything.

Due to rise in price and drop in demand many hand cart stalls have stopped selling tomatoes. They are getting limited quantities for sale going door to door in push carts. "My daughter likes tomato curry, but when I heard the rate, I decided not to buy tomatoes at all. Instead I would use ketchup for dishes as that is affordable," said Nupur K, a homemaker.

A daily wage worker, Shanthi said with prices of tomatoes soaring, the family has decided to buy only essential items for cooking.

Farmers and dealers at yard say the heavy rainfall is hampering the crops.

PREMATURE BABIES CAN SURVIVE WITH ADVANCED NEONATAL CARE

SHILPA P @Bengaluru

THOUGH the incidence of premature deliveries has increased by at least 20 per cent over the past two decades due to late marriages, advanced parental age, pregnancies, lifestyle and infections including Covid, still there is hope.

With advanced neonatal care facilities most of the babies can survive and stay healthy. Except for 47 babies of 3,000 premature babies (more than 99 per cent) with the youngest being 24 weeks old, others have survived in the city-based Rainbow Children's Hospital in the past six years, said Dr Saravanan R, consultant, department of neonatology and paediatrics at the Hospital. Among them, 130 babies weighed less than 1 kg. Except for 11 of them, the rest have survived, he added.

It was a moment of joy for parents of at least 100 premature babies who participated, shared their experiences and instilled hope among parents of premature babies at the "Big Little Reunion" hosted by Rainbow Children's hospital in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Dr Saravanan said that among the premature babies born at 24 weeks, with advanced treatment at the hospital, only two suffered long-term complications. While one has difficulty in walking, another had delayed speech, he said.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

16th May : I am sure you know that astrology is linked to numerology. Today is the 16th, and one plus six makes seven. In ancient times humanity was taught wisdom by seven wise men, we had seven planets and the world was surrounded by seven mountains. And that's before we get onto the seven days of the week. Most people say seven is a good, optimistic, number. I don't disagree!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
No matter how relaxed the pace of life today, the end of the week could be rather hectic. There will also be a certain amount of emotional tension. You may therefore come to be grateful for your foresight and refusal to put off tasks that should be done as soon as possible.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
You may have a conservative reputation but, if allowed to express yourself, you have a wonderfully understated eccentric way of working. Now that Venus is aligned with a publicity-minded region of your chart, partners and associates will begin to notice your fascinating qualities.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
The Moon makes a number of very sharp moves today, which means that domestic affairs should now be sorted out and family relationships resolved, at least until the end of the week. Older relations could be the most helpful - you know who you can rely on.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Everything that has happened recently has conspired to change the rules of the game. Don't blame other people though, after all it's you who has moved the goal posts, possibly for the very good reason that it seemed the right thing to do at the time.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
The Moon eases its way through a private sector of your chart, inspiring dreams, strange imaginings and mysteries of the most colourful kind. You will relish any intrigues or uncertainty that cloud your vision today. After all, a mystery could be the cause of much more pleasure.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
Nobody can really put you on the spot or undermine your confidence. You are so full of self-doubt that you are skilled at sabotaging your own interests. Make it your goal to boost your self-esteem and inspire respect. But don't feel that you need to rush into anything hasty.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
Your personal affairs will be highlighted in a rather special and even spectacular way this week. Yet another full seven days may pass before you can genuinely get to grips with outstanding domestic differences and family hopes. That gives you every reason to wait until your mind is made up.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
Pluto is a volatile planet, though often a force for good. This week you can be fully confident that this wonderful planet's healing and restorative powers will be used utterly in your favour - even if at first it looks as if the opposite is true. Things are not always what they seem!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
Because Jupiter, your planetary ruler, is still so powerful, you have all the protection you need. However, I would not say that this is a time for taking risks. On the contrary, great prudence is required. You see, if you're to be a proper gambler you have to know the outcome before you start.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
Even though you may be convinced that some kind of major career or professional change is unavoidable, you may hold things up for a while if you wish. However, it is certain that you can trust partners' generosity. Think now about what you might offer in return.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
Even the most dedicated Aquarians shouldn't keep their noses pressed to the grindstone all week. After all, you need a rest and a chance to get on with your own intensely personal interests. A word of advice - treat all amazing financial offers with a huge pinch of salt.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
Mercury is moving through your chart at a fair old pace, an indication that you only have a limited period of time, probably about two weeks, to arrange interviews, attend meetings and make proposals. What is most important today, though, is the Moon, which is reinforcing and stiffening your emotions.

THE PHANTOM

HI AND LOIS

WOULD YOU LIKE A GLASS OF WINE WITH DINNER?
I WOULD! THAT WOULD BE PERFECT!
I SHOULD HAVE CHECKED TO SEE IF WE HAD ANY WINE BEFORE I SUGGESTED THAT.

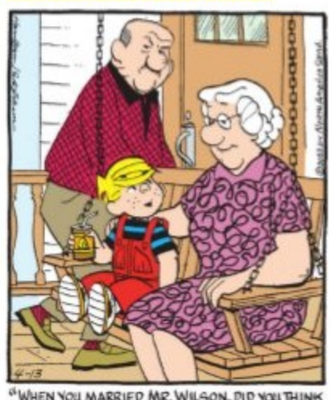
BEETLE BAILEY

WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING?
A NEW WEAPON. I CALL IT "THE AGITRON"
HOW DOES IT WORK?
YOU DROP IT BEHIND ENEMY LINES AND IT PLAYS AN ENDLESS LOOP OF SARGE YELLING

BLONDIE

LOCKHORNS

DENNIS THE MENACE



SU DO KU

Easy: Test your number crunching skill with our unique puzzle

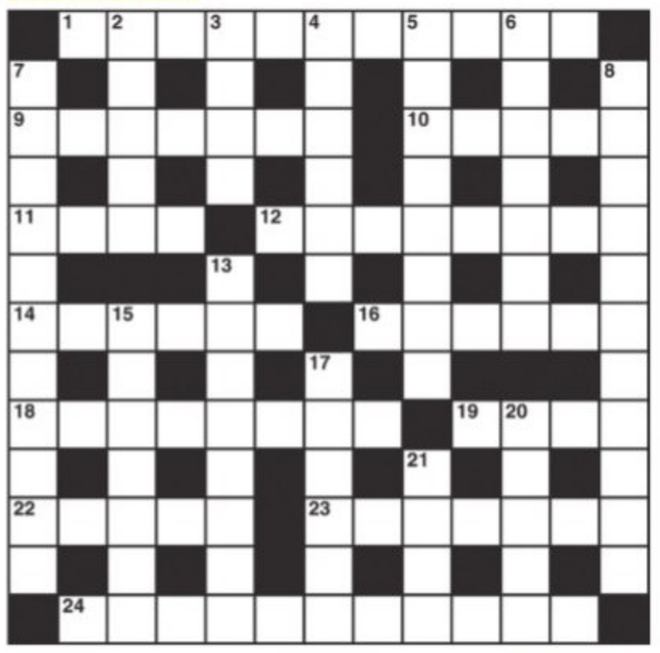
■ Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

	3			5	6		4	
	4		8	7				1
7		9	4			5		6
		4					1	9
9			6		1			2
1	8					7		
6		5			8	2		3
3				6	2		7	
	1		3	9			5	

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle

8	3	5	1	4	2	7	9	6
2	9	7	6	5	8	1	4	3
1	4	6	7	3	9	5	2	8
7	1	8	4	2	3	9	6	5
9	2	4	5	6	7	8	3	1
5	6	3	8	9	1	2	7	4
4	7	2	3	8	5	6	1	9
3	8	1	9	7	6	4	5	2
6	5	9	2	1	4	3	8	7

CROSS WORD



ACROSS
1 Strive to cheat as many as possible (2,3,3,3)
9 A policeman when not on duty is unconventional (7)
10 Spent about a pound for cloth (5)
11 Top deck on old ship is lacking lights (4)
12 Steps around the pub to see the boats (8)
14 Team appears one by one (6)
16 Excuse the French gentleman (3,3)
18 Embarrassed-looking Marxist confronted (3-5)
19 Either way it was of some worth in India (4)
22 Enter the lists? (5)
23 Form of ciphers (7)
24 Alan's note is startling in a way (11)

DOWN
2 Bid with lots of fervour (5)
3 Willingly have a new life (4)
4 Get the boat in somehow (6)
5 Retired writer gets points and costs (8)
6 Foreign capital used by Napoleon from a very early age (7)
7 Frozen to the core? (4-7)
8 Final date in the Julian calendar? (4,2,5)
13 Rats fled US at variance (8)
15 Approve of or object to a wild rose (7)
17 Domestic service (3,3)
20 Standard article for a girl (5)
21 Be quiet, give two rings and drive away (4)

SATURDAY'S: SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Job lot, 4 Chaperon, 9 No dice, 10 Egg spoon, 12 Yank, 13 Dover, 14 Ring, 17 Right-hand man, 20 Stenographer, 23 Anti, 24 Amber, 25 Beam, 28 Apostles, 29 Hoodoo, 30 Amethyst, 31 League.

Down: 1 Junkyard, 2 Badinage, 3 Ouch, 5 Higher degree, 6 Pass, 7 Rookie, 8 Nonage, 11 Roman numbers, 15 State, 16 Papal, 18 Sheepdog, 19 Primrose, 21 Canada, 22 Strobe, 26 Etch, 27 Love.

JUMBLE By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RAWOR
NVMEO
TUTNAR
CAMPIT

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He's got it pretty good.
Yep. He gets the best food, a comfy bed and lots of love.
KEEPING THEIR KITTY HAPPY WAS WITHIN THE COUPLE'S ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon

Print your answer here:

" " "

ANSWERS TOMORROW

SATURDAY'S **Jumbles:**
AFOOT KIOSK RITUAL COARSE
ANSWER: When his golf ball bounced off the rock and went in the hole, it was a — STROKE OF LUCK

DURATION OF PANDEMIC	CASES REPORTED	DEATHS	DISCHARGES
2 YEARS, 68 DAYS	■ 126 ◄ 103	■ 0 | ◄ 0	■ 103 | ◄ 179
	TALLY	POSITIVITY RATE	MORTALITY RATE
■ TODAY ◄ YESTERDAY	■ 39,49,675 ◄ 39,49,549	■ 5.98% | ◄ 5.99%	■ 1.01% | ◄ 1.01%
	ACTIVE CASES ■ 1,891 ◄ 1,868		RECOVERY RATE ■ 98.93% ◄ 98.93%

B'luru Urban: 118	Chamarajanagar: 0	Dharwad: 1	Kolara: 0	Shivamogga: 1
B'luru Rural: 0	Chikkaballapur: 0	Gadag: 0	Koppal: 0	Tumakuru: 0
Bagalkot: 0	Chikkamagaluru: 0	Hassan: 2	Mandya: 0	Udupi: 0
Ballari: 2	Chitradurga: 1	Haveri: 0	Mysuru: 1	U Kannada: 0
Belagavi: 0	D Kannada: 1	Kalaburagi: 0	Raichur: 0	Vijayapura: 0
Bidar: 0	Davanagere: 0	Kodagu: 0	Ramanagara: 0	Yadgir: 0

Kids to get 2nd dose at schools, PHCs

Move aimed at improving low vaccination coverage among the age group 12 to 17 yrs

SHILPA P @Bengaluru

TO improve low vaccination coverage of the second dose especially among children in the age group of 12 to 17, the health department in all districts have come up with their action plans.

With the fourth wave predicted in June, district health administrations have begun to conduct special vaccination drives for kids at schools or public health centres near schools while coordinating with school authorities, said Arundathi Chandrashekar, Mission director, National Health Mission.

Of the target 31,75,000 children between 15 and 17 years, 81.45 per cent (25,86,251) have been vaccinated with first dose, and only 68.8 per cent (21,84,630) have received the second dose. Among the children between the age group of 12 to 14 (20,25,000), 83.86 per cent (16,98,322) are have been inoculated with the first dose while only 18.12 per cent (3,67,074) have received the second jab.

Among 4,89,16,000 adults, only 12,83,349 (2.62 per cent) have received the precautionary or the booster dose. As cases have come down, people are not inclined to take the precautionary dose. However, apprehending the fourth wave, people are coming to take the booster shot, a medical officer of health department said.

"In order to improve inoculation of precautionary dose among adults, we have increased information, education and communication through phone calls and messages to persons eligible for the dose. And we are even planning to give precautionary dose at the doorsteps of beneficiaries," Chandrashekar said.

To improve inoculation of precautionary dose among adults, we have increased information, education and communication through calls and messages to those eligible

Arundathi Chandrashekar, director, National Health Mission

Bescom blames ad firm for man's electrocution

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE death of a 35-year-old man due to electrocution at Hebbal bus stand has led to blame game with Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (Bescom) saying the incident took place due to illegally drawn power to an advertisement board.

An official statement issued by Bescom stated that the incident occured at around 9.40 pm when the victim touched the metal part of the bus shelter.

"Executive Engineer, Assistant Executive Engineer and Section Officer of Bescom, Hebbal division, visited the spot and found that an unauthorised extension of low-tension power through aluminium overhead wire was drawn by a private advertising agency named Times Innovative Media from the pole situated near the bus stand. Power was illegally drawn from the pole for the hoarding which was placed on a bus shelter. The wires were not connected properly and when the man touched the rod he got an electric shock," the official statement said.

Power supply to the advertising hoarding was disconnected in December 2020 after the consumer failed to pay the outstanding bill. The bill amount was adjusted from the deposit and the power supply was disconnected. But unauthorised power was drawn from the pole by the agency recently, Bescom alleged.

"It was a fatal, non-departmental accident and the vigilance wing of Bescom has decided to file a complaint against the private advertising agency for illegally drawing power connections," a senior Bescom official said.

SECOND INCIDENT

On April 25, a 22-year-old daily wage worker Kishore B was electrocuted on Sanjaynagar Main Road. Kishore was walking home when he came in contact with an internet cable and died on the spot. Based on a complaint, Sanjaynagar police arrested three staffers, including an area manager of the internet service provider company.

49-year-old man gets new lease of life after bilateral lung transplant

BALA CHAUHAN @Bengaluru

A 49-year-old man, who was diagnosed with Interstitial Lung Disease (ILD) five years ago recently underwent bilateral sequential lung transplantation (transplant of both lungs) at SS Sparsh Hospital in RR Nagar, Bengaluru. The transplant was jointly performed by Dr Kumud Dhital and his thoracic transplant team from Sparsh, and Dr Ravindra Mehta and his pulmonology team from Apollo Hospitals. Dr Dhital is Programme & Surgical Director, Heart & Lung Transplant, Sparsh Hospital and Dr Mehta is Director, Pulmonology, Apollo Hospitals.

"The transplant was done as a part of an MoU between the surgical team of Sparsh Hospitals and the pulmonology team of Apollo Hospitals," said Dr Dhital.

He added that the patient was recently reviewed at Sparsh Hospital for a rapidly progressive end-stage respiratory failure.

ILD is an umbrella term used for a large group of diseases that cause scarring (fibrosis) of the lungs, leading to stiffness in the lungs which makes it difficult to breathe. Lung damage from ILDs is often irreversible and tends to worsen with time.

Speaking about the procedure to TNSE, Dr Dhital said while waiting for the transplant, the patient had lost a lot of weight. "The bilateral lung transplantation is a high-risk procedure. In heart and lung transplants, regardless of the blood group and tissue typing, sizing is very important. The donor's lungs should fit the size of the chest cavity of the recipient. Lungs tend to shrink. We often cannot use donor lungs because of size mismatch," he explained. In this case, he said, the donor lungs were earlier rejected by another hospital. "In this case too, they were a little over sized but we waited and allowed them to adjust to the recipient's cavity," added the surgeon.

FOR NIRVANA

Monks take part in rituals on the eve of Buddha Jayanti at the Maha Bodhi Society, in Bengaluru on Sunday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

CRIME PATROL

Film producer killed in road accident

Bengaluru: Kannada film producer Anekal Balaraj (64) was killed in a hit and run case in Gourava Nagar in JP Nagar's 7th phase on Sunday morning. Kumaraswamy Layout traffic police said Balaraj, a resident of Gourava Nagar, had gone for a morning walk and was returning home in his car. He parked the car by the roadside to cross the road to go to an ATM, at 8 am when a pulsar bike hit him and sped away. Balaraj fell on his back, sustaining grave injuries in the head. Balaraj has produced several movies including 'Kariya', a blockbuster starring Darshan. He was in the film industry for more than 25 years and was also a distributor. ENS

Shorter delivery time adds to woes of gig workers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

THE shortage of workers is also attributed to the growth of these companies, the gig workers admit.

"Due to an increase in demand during the pandemic and less traffic, workers were able to make more deliveries and earn more. However, with demand not going down post-pandemic, and customers preferring to order food and groceries online, the pressure of navigating congested roads has become difficult. It is more challenging as the platforms promise shorter delivery time and offer only non-permanent work arrangements, making gig working less desirable, especially with some companies lowering their rates of commission," said a food delivery partner.

"The emergence of quick commerce business models over well-established ones is definitely a contributing factor. Workers face increasing pressure due to promises of 10 to 15 minute delivery time," said a member of the Food Delivery Partners Association. While the shortage may not affect food supplies directly, customers may have to deal with increasingly longer waiting time for their food and grocery deliveries till companies resolve the crisis, the Association members said.

THIS THIEF STOLE SUV DURING TEST DRIVE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AMRUTHALLI police have arrested a 36-year-old history-sheeter who had escaped with an SUV of a businessman on the pretext of test drive. The city based businessman had posted the vehicle in OLX.

The accused M G Venkatesh Naik, a resident of Bhuvaneshwari Nagar on Dasarahalli Main Road, was working in an apartment as maintenance staff.

A senior police officer said that Naik kept a tab on the online sites which sell vehicles. On January 30, this year, he contacted Ravindra, a businessman using a stolen mobile and claimed that he wanted to buy the car. He took the keys and escaped with the SUV on the pretext of a test drive.

Ravindra waited for a day and as he did not turn up, he approached Amruthahalli police. A technical team led by Amruthalli police station tracked the accused through the OLX IP address. It was a mammoth task as the police team got over 2,500 IP address which were checked one by one before zeroing in on the accused and under intense questioning he confessed to the crime. The police have recovered the car and a mobile phone. He intended to sell the stolen cars for quick bucks, and he has been involved in similar cases earlier.

Rowdy held for robbing jeweller

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Pulikeshi Nagar police have arrested a notorious rowdy who had barged into a jewellery shop in JC Nagar and had escaped with 73 gm of gold jewels after threatening the shop owner with a sword.

The accused, Siddique alias Burn (24), a resident of KG Halli, had stolen a scooter that was parked outside an office in Cox Town on May 5 morning. In the same vehicle, he went to Siddarth Bankers and Jewellers in Pottery Town located in the jurisdiction of JC Nagar, where he barged into the shop and threatened the shop owner Siddarth Jain with a sword. Though the owner resisted, Siddique had escaped with 72 gm of gold jewels and Rs 4,000 cash.

While the Pulikeshinagar police had registered a vehicle theft case, the JC Nagar police had registered the robbery case. The Pulikeshinagar police nabbed Siddique on Friday and recovered the scooter and the gold jewels, and remanded him in judicial custody.

"Siddique was arrested by the High Grounds police about three months in a robbery case and he was released on bail just a few days ago. He has more than 10 cases registered against him in various police stations," the police added.

IN THE COURT OF THE PRINCIPAL CIVIL JUDGE & JMFC AT NELAMANGALA
C.MIS.PETITION No. 42/2022
Between : Ranganna & Others ..... Petitioner
And
Registrar of Births and Deaths, City Municipal Counsel, Nelamangala .....Respondent

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Where as the petitioners above named has presented petition to this Hon'ble Court under sectioin 13(3) of registration of births and deaths act 1969, for order direct the respondent authority to get enter the date of death of petitioner father by name Venkatahanumaiah was died on 25.06.1987, mother by name Lakshmamma was died on 29.02.2016.
Petitioner their house at Kempalinganahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Nelamangala Taluk, Banglaore Rural District. The Hon'ble court has fixed on 18.06.2022 for hearing of the petition and that if any person/s desire to oppose the said petion petition or claim or interest shall appear before the Hon'ble court in person or pleader duly instructed at 11.AM falling which the said application will be heard and determined as experte.
Given under my hand and the seal of the court on this 20.04.2022

by the order of the court
Sd/- Shirastedar
Principal Civil Judge & JMFC at Nelamangala
Advocate for Petitioners
Purushothama. N, Advocate
Nelamangala

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Log to www.newindianexpress.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that the original Sale Deed dated 7.5.2003 executed by Sri.D.M.J.J.Kumar and others in favour of Sri.Suresh Prabhu, registered as document 570 of 2003-04, Book-I, stored in CD No.43, registered on 8.5.2003, in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Shivajinagar, Bangalore, relating to the property given in the Schedule hereunder, has either been lost or misplaced and the same is not traceable.

If any person holding the said document as security or any one has any claim or objections in the matter of the Schedule property, may contact the undersigned within 7 days from the date of this notice, failing which, it would be presumed that there are no claims over the said property.

SCHEDULE

All that part and parcel of residential immovable property comprising of land together with existing building bearing Municipal New No.7, Old No.7 & 8, (earlier No.6), situated at Cambridge Cross Road, Ulsoor, in Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike Ward No.75, PID No.75-45-7, Bangalore, measuring East to West 59'6" and North to South 29'6", totally measuring 1755.25 Sq.ft., together with building constructed thereon, and bounded on:

East by : Property No.6;
West by : Property No.515;
North by : Cambridge Cross Road;
South by : Ranka Court Apartment.

JEROME D'SOUZA, ADVOCATE
No.5, 3rd Floor, "A" Block, St.Patrick's Complex, Brigade Road
Bangalore - 560025. Ph: 9845569021.
BANGALORE, Date:12.5.2022

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala - 147001.
Corporate Identity No. : U40109PB2010SGC033813, Website : www.pspcl.in
(Contact No. 96461 20640)

Tender Enquiry No. 1381/O&M/PC-2287 Dated : 13.05.2022

Chief Engineer / O&M (P&P Cell-II), GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat, invites E-tender for the **Procurement of Heavy Chemicals viz, Caustic Soda Lye (47.5%), Hydrochloric Acid (30%)** Liquid Chlorine, Quantity as per NIT. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to **https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 13.05.2022 from 17:00 hrs onwards.**
Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at **https://eproc.punjab.gov.in.**

236/GHTP-20/22-5/14/2022
76155/12/856/2021/14229

Transgender stabbed to death, accused hurt

BENGALURU: A 30-year-old transgender was stabbed to death by her male friend in a lodge over a financial dispute on Friday night. The accused sustained grievous injuries after the victim stabbed him back.

The deceased Sanjana, was a native of Kalaburagi, who was residing in Katriguppe. The condition of the accused Ankith, 32, is serious, police said.

A senior police officer said that around 10.45 pm, Sanjana along with two male friends had come to the lodge and after a while they were embroiled in a fight over a financial dispute. Ankith, who is from West Bengal along with his friend Anand attacked Sanjana in a fit of rage with a knife repeatedly. In a bid of escape, Sanjana snatched the knife and stabbed Ankith. The lodge staff, alerted by the screaming, rushed both the injured to Victoria Hospital where Sanjana succumbed to her injuries on Saturday.

Cottonpet police have arrested Anand. Ankith and Anand work in a canteen in a private hospital. ENS

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF SPACE - U.R. RAO SATELLITE CENTRE
CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP, HAL Airport Road, Bangalore - 560 017
(Phone: 080 25084177, 4184, 4156)

BRIEF E-TENDER NOTICE

On behalf of the President of India, item-rate tender is invited for the following works:

Sl.No	Description	Details		
1	Name of work	Periodical upkeep of Labs & Office areas in URSC campus, Vimanapura, Bangalore -560017 for a period of one year	AMC for Operation and Maintenance of Housekeeping Services in Space Park, MSA and surrounding buildings at ISITE campus, URSC and RRSC-South, Marathahalli, Bengaluru -560037 for a period of one year	AMC Contract for Operation and Maintenance of PH facilities, STP, Masonry, Carpentry and allied services at ISITE campus, Marathahalli, Bengaluru-560037 for a period of one year
2	E-Tender Notice No.	URSC/C&MG/C/TN/03/2022-23 dated: 13.05.2022	URSC/C&MG/C/TN/04/2022-23 dated: 13.05.2022	URSC/C&MG/C/TN/05/2022-23 dated: 13.05.2022
3	Estimated cost put to tender	₹ 143.00 Lakhs	₹ 250.00 Lakhs	₹ 206.00 Lakhs
4	Tender Document details	E-Tender		
5	Period of completion	TWELVE MONTHS	TWELVE MONTHS	TWELVE MONTHS
6	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	₹ 2,86,000/- valid for 180 days	₹ 5,00,000/- valid for 180 days	₹ 4,12,000/- valid for 180 days
7	Period during which the tender document can be downloaded.	From 16.30 hrs on 17.05.2022 to 16.30 hrs on 31.05.2022		
8	Bid clarification	From 10.30 hrs on 18.05.2022 to 17.00 hrs on 1.6.2022		
9	Last date of reply to Bid Clarification	Up to 17.00 hrs. on 2.6.2022		
10	Last date and time for receipt of tenders	Up to 14.30 hrs. on 3.6.2022		
11	Due date and time of opening of tenders	14.30 hrs onwards on 3.6.2022		

Interested tenderers may please refer Detailed Notice Inviting E-Tender (NIET) for eligibility criteria and other details along with Hindi version in website: www.isro.gov.in and download the tender documents from www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO.

Sd/-, Group Director, C&MG

KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LIMITED

DEMAND NOTICE

Registered Office: 27 BKC , C 27, G Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai-400051. Branch Office: No.22, M G Road, Bangalore-560001.

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of **Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. (KMBL)** under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued **Demand Notices** under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective **Demand Notice(s)** issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to **KMBL**, within **60 days** from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said **Demand Notice(s),** from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/ writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to **KMBL** by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Name of the Borrower(s) / Guarantor (s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of secured asset (immovable property)
Loan Account No. **LAP17876457 & LAP 18236888 (CRN No. 15979659).** **1) Dharamshi Metals Pvt. Ltd.,** Represented by Managing Director **Mr. Paresh D,** No.A-76, KSSIDC Industrial Shed, Bommasandra Industrial Estate, Bommasandra, Bangalore-562158 **(Borrower). 2) Mr. Ram Mangala @ Mangalaram,** No.125/31, 11th Main, Near KFC, 4th Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore-560011. **Also at:** No.17 (Old No.180), Ground Floor, 32nd Cross, 4th Block, Jayanagar East, Bangalore-560011 **(Guarantor). 3) M/s. Mahalaksmi Agencies,** Represented by its Partner, No.17 (Old No.180), Ground Floor, 32nd Cross, 4th Block, Jayanagar East, Bangalore-560011 **(Guarantor). 4) Mr. Paresh D Dharamshi @ Paresh D Shah, 5) Mrs. Ketki P Shah,** No.527, 11th A Cross, 8th Main, Near Dalimia Circle, J.P.Nagar, 2nd Phase, Bangalore-560078 **(Guarantor).**	Demand Notice Date: 13-05-2022 Rs. 2,44,04,447.50 Ps (Rupees Two Crore Forty Four Lakh Four Thousand Four Hundred Forty Seven and Fifty Paise Only)	**Mortgage over following properties:** **Item No.1:** All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Shed No.A-76, (Industrial Factory Shed) situated at Industrial Estate, Bommasandra, Hosur Road, presently comes under BBMP, measuring East to West 22.65 Mtrs., North to South 42.45 Mtrs., in total area of 971.04 Sq Mtrs., together with all existing building and structures thereon and building and structures as may be erected/constructed there upon any time from/after the date of respective mortgages and all additions thereto and all fixtures and furniture's and plant and machinery attached to the earth or permanently fastened to anything attached to the earth, both present and future and **bounded on: East by:** Shed No.A-69, **West by:** Road, **North by:** Road, **South by:** Shed No. A-75. **Item No.2: Schedule-A:** All that piece and parcel of the converted lands being part of BBMP khata No.306/287/244 (earlier being khata No.244, issued by City Municipal Council, Bommanahalli), situatded in Hongasandra Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk and Part of BBMP khata No.934/919/904 (earlier being khata No.904 issued by CMC, Bommanahalli and No.904, madiwala notified area) situated in Bommanahalli Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk and Khata No.306/287/244 (earlier being khata No.244 issued by CMC Bommanahalli and No.904 Madiwala Notified area), situated at Hongasandra Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluka, in all measuring 72,783.84 Square Meters, i.e., 7,83,445.33 Square feet, comprising of Item Nos. (A) Survey No.4/1, measuring 45,792.56 Square Feet, (B) Survey No.4/2, measuring 67,440.284 Square Feet, (C) Survey No.4/3A, measuring 37,083.51 Square Feet, (D) Survey No.4/3C, measuring 22,869 Square Feet, (E) Survey No.4/4, measuring 88,184.658 Square Feet, (F) Survey No.4/5, measuring 69,444.008 Square Feet, (G) Survey No.4/6, measuring 85,022.576 Square Feet, (H) Survey No.4/7, measuring 68,313.647 Square Feet, (I) Survey No.4/8A, measuring 32,845.699 Square Feet, (J) Survey No.4/8B2, measuring 19,790 Square Feet, (K) Survey No.4/9, measuring 3811.5043 Square Feet, all Bommanahalli Village and (L) Survey No.6/9, measuring 23958 Square Feet, (M) Survey No.6/10, measuring 21780 Square Feet, (N) Survey No.6/11, measuring 38115 Square Feet, (O) Survey No.6/12, measuring 79497 Square Feet, (P) Survey No.6/13A, measuring 16335 Square Feet, (Q) Survey No.6/13B, measuring 63162 Square Feet, all Hongasandra Village and the aforesaid property **bounded as follows: East by:** NH 7- Hosur Road, and Oxford Collage and Private Property, **West by:** Begur Road and Private Property, **North by:** Private Property, **South by:** Road. **Schedule-B:** An undivided 0.047% share from and out of the Schedule "A" Property within the Brich Block, constructed and land appurtenant to said Brich Block. **Schedule-C:** A Two Bedroom Apartment bearing No.A-402, on the Fourth Floor, in Brich Block of the Development known as "GREENAGE" a project promoted by the "Salarpuria Sattva Group" having super built up area 1345 Sq.ft., (which is inclusive of the floors, ceiling and wall between the apartments and proportionate share in all common areas) within one covered Car Parking Space.

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to **KMBL** as aforesaid, **KMBL** shall proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Borrowers as to the costs and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the aforesaid assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of **KMBL.** Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Date: 16.05.2021, Place: Bangalore

Sd/- Authorized Officer, For Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.

Social Welfare and Backward Classes Welfare Minister Kota Shrinivas Poojari said that as many as five Deendayal Upadhyay hostels will be built in the state by the government. "Each Deendayal Upadhyay hostel will accommodate 1,000 students and the cost of each hostel has been estimated at Rs 50 crore," he said

BJP sure of big gains in oppn turf

Arun Singh says focus is on further strengthening party in areas where it is weak

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

WITH the BJP trying to make inroads into Old Mysuru, the party's National General Secretary Arun Singh expressed confidence that the party will make significant gains in the region in the 2023 polls.

"Old Mysuru is a challenge, but we are working on it. This time we will have major gains in the region," Singh told The New Indian Express.

Ahead of the 2023 polls, the party will focus on further strengthening the organisation and leaders from other parties will be inducted, especially in the areas where the party is weak, he said.

Slamming the Opposition Congress for making a flurry of allegations against the government, Singh said the Congress has become a "conspiracy party" and trying to build a false narrative. He blamed the Congress for allegations made by the State Contractors Association stating that some people supported by the party are making those allegations.

BJP National General Secretary Arun Singh adjusts the spectacles of a woman during a health camp in Chikkaballapur on Sunday. Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar looks on

> **Sometimes the narrative will be around corruption and sometimes it will be about replacing Bommai or (BJP state president) Nalin Kumar Kateel. There will be no changes in any positions**
>
> Arun Singh, BJP National General Secretary

"We don't have to counter everything; if we do that the issue will only become bigger. We have to take a bigger line and show that we have worked for people. That is what we did in Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Manipur and Uttarakhand," Singh said, explaining that the government and the party will focus on the development agenda. "Development will be the focus. The image of the government and Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai is good and we need to educate people about the CM and government works," he said. The government is not on the defensive, but it cannot be on the offensive too. It has to work for people, he said.

Singh ruled out any changes in the leadership. "Sometimes the narrative will be around corruption and sometimes it will be about replacing Bommai or (BJP state president) Nalin Kumar Kateel. There will be no changes in any positions. They are doing good work and they will continue," he said.

Dynasty politics

Responding to a question on the BJP's decision to recommend B S Yediyurappa's son B Y Vijayendra's name for the Legislative Council polls when the party accuses Congress of dynastic politics, Singh said they cannot deny an opportunity for a leader's son if he works for the party. "We are talking about the parties like Congress that are controlled by families as there will be no checks and balances in place," he said.

Singh said the party is confident of winning three Rajya Sabha seats from the state and the BJP Central Election Committee will decide on the strategies. The BJP can comfortably win two seats.

IT WILL BE BATTLE ROYAL IN OLD MYSURU REGION

POLITICAL RADAR

Ramu Patil
Associate Editor
ramu@newindianexpress.com

THE ruling BJP's well-oiled election machinery is gearing up for the 2023 Assembly polls with a clear focus on the Old Mysuru region. Though the party emerged as a major force in the state over the last two decades, this territory has remained elusive.

In the run-up to the elections, the spotlight will be on the districts around Bengaluru and Mysuru. In many ways, the region, excluding Bengaluru, with around 60 seats of the total 224 Assembly segments is likely to decide the course of state politics even after the polls. While the rest of the state will witness a direct contest between the two national parties, Old Mysuru constituencies are certain to see a triangular fight with JDS being in a dominant position in many segments.

While winning seats in the region will be a crucial part of BJP's strategy to return to power on its own strength and overcome the jinx of stopping just short of getting a clear majority, for the regional party, it is a fight for survival. For Congress leaders, it is the question of winning the maximum number of seats and staking a claim for the top post. It will be a real test for state Congress president DK Shivakumar's leadership and chief ministerial ambitions, while an opportunity for Siddaramaiah to reassert his leadership after the humiliating defeat in his home constituency in the 2018 polls.

Early signs of that pitched battle are already visible. The BJP seems to be on a drive to induct leaders from other parties and perhaps continue it till the polls. In the run-up to the elections, many of its central and state leaders will focus on the Congress and JDS strongholds to create a conducive atmosphere and change the equation right at the booth level. At the micro-level, the party categorises booths as A, B and C. The first is the party's strongholds; the second is where it has a 50-50 chance and the last category is where the party faces a tough challenge.

The BJP may have a clear strategy and the resources to implement it; but the big challenge is to match the opposition firepower in the region. Congress top guns DK Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah and JDS leaders HD Deve Gowda and HD Kumaraswamy all come from the region. On its part, the BJP is promoting Vokkaliga community leaders, who seem to be doing their best. But most of them are from Bengaluru city, barring a few senior leaders. Now, the party is likely to give importance to the region during the ministry rejig and also in the party reorganisation ahead of polls.

Apart from the dominant Vokkaliga community, the party is also focusing on the significant backward class votes. Siddaramaiah enjoys a considerable support base among them, although OBC voters have not fully backed Congress in recent elections. The JDS, meanwhile, is making efforts to woo minorities by appointing CM Ibrahim as the state unit president. Overcoming internal differences among its top leaders and consolidating anti-BJP votes may be a challenge for Congress. The JDS is facing its own share of problems with leaders deserting it in droves. While those factors may help BJP, its strategy cannot depend only on these aspects.

Going by the recent bypolls and Council election results, the BJP and the Congress seem to be on an equal footing in most of the regions, except in Old Mysuru. In Vokkaliga-dominated areas, the Opposition party has some advantage and hopes to use it to negate the ruling party's possible gains in Lingayat-dominated North Karnataka. This was one of the major factors for the BJP's growth under the leadership of BS Yediyurappa. Before the BJP emerged as a force, the community had backed Congress and Janata Parivar for a long time. As BJP slowly consolidated its position in North Karnataka, the JDS managed to retain its hold in Old Mysuru. Congress could get the full support of the community when SM Krishna became the chief minister in 1999.

Now, Shivakumar is hoping to do an encore of the Congress performance under Krishna, the JDS is fighting for its survival and the BJP is going all guns blazing to conquer the last bastion. If the preparations are anything to go by, Old Mysuru is sure to witness a battle royal and decide the course of Karnataka politics.

COUNTER PLAINT

Booked by panchayat, contractor to take action

SHREEPADA AYACHIT @Koppal

YERISWAMY Kuntoji, a civil contractor from Gangavati in Koppal district, who was booked by the local panchayat for writing a letter to the Prime Minister's office complaining about delay in sanctioning work money, has decided to take legal action against the officials. He said he is in touch with a legal team and has applied for bail. "Once the bail work is over, I will file a counter-complaint against those who booked me under IPC Section 406," he said.

The case against Kuntoji was registered in Gangavati rural police station. He had supplied materials worth Rs 15 lakh for MGNREGA works under Mushtoor GP in Karatagi taluk of Koppal district. He said despite repeated pleas for bill payment, officials created undue delays, and hence he wrote to the PMO.

However, the Karatagi Taluk Panchayat booked a case in Gangavati rural police station against him on charges of breach of trust and shooting a missive to the PMO.

Kuntoji alleged that he has already paid a 'commission' of Rs 12,000, but a bill payment of jut Rs 4.80 lakh out of a total of Rs 15 lakh was made so far. Officials are demanding more 'commission' and deliberately diverted his payment to another named Rehan Enterprises, he charged.

Koppal ZP officials attributed the delay in bill payment to technical reasons. "The payment was delayed due to technical issues. The matter is being looked into," said an official.

K'taka HC to hear plea on ZP, TP polls

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court will hear on Monday a plea by the Karnataka State Election Commission about holding the all-important Zilla Panchayat and Taluk Panchayat elections. It may be recalled that the State Election Commission (SEC) had filed a memo on Thursday before a division bench of Justices B M Shyam Prasad and M G S Kamal in the backdrop of the Supreme Court verdict over holding the elections to these local bodies immediately.

The Election Commission, in its petition, said an emergency situation has risen due to the Supreme Court's order on Tuesday. Senior counsel K N Phanindra, appearing for the Election Commission, submitted that the poll body's petition over holding the ZP-TP elections was pending before the High Court. So, a memo was filed for an early hearing of this matter. The SEC had prepared for the ZP-TP polls in Karnataka in April and May of 2021. The delimitation exercise on constituencies were completed and the final list of voters was also published by the SEC. The reservation draft was also announced last year.

But before the SEC could announce the election schedule, the state government had withdrawn the powers of the SEC to redraw the constituencies and prepare the reservation list. The government created a new delimitation panel to conduct the exercise. The Election Commission had challenged the formation of this panel in a writ petition before the High Court.

STRAWS IN THE WIND

Ministry rejig, a mirage?

The carrot is dangling before the cart, and aspirants are running hard to become ministers at least for the last few months of the present BJP government before the Assembly elections next year. Dates have come and gone and Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has gone and come from New Delhi frequently, each time announcing that the cabinet rejig could happen anytime soon. But nothing solid has come out of any of those announcements. It was said that Bommai would discuss the ministry rejig with central leaders when he visited New Delhi for the CM-chief justices meeting in April. It did not happen. Later, it was announced that the exercise would be taken up after Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to the state. It did not happen. Now, it is being said it might happen after Bommai's visit to Davos to attend the World Economic Forum summit. But then, who knows what the future holds.

Siddu for CM and the smoke screen

Siddaramaiah, the wizard with numbers and finance, hogged the limelight at the Congress party's Chintan Shivir in Udaipur, Rajasthan, and rightly so. The senior politician, who has presented nine budgets in the state, was given the stage to express his thoughts on the country's economy. Taking this as the party's high regards for the Congress Legislature Party leader, his followers reportedly tried to plant a news story that the high command was pushing him for the chief minister's post if the party wins the next Assembly elections. Obviously, no such announcement came as the Grand Old Party that is sinking across the country had bigger things to worry about.

Bommai, the yes man

Namma CM Basavaraj Bommai is a yes man. A journalist, who got Bommai to attend a ceremony to hand over the newly developed Banyan Park to the local press club in Tumakuru and also to lay the foundation stone for the renovation of the Patrika Bhavan, said, "Bommai is such an extraordinary politician, he never says no to anybody." Not just these events, the busy CM is also attending a series of programmes throughout the day in the city. Doubters may snigger and say that it is all aimed at next year's Assembly polls, but no one can deny the fact that he is out there doing all that he can to prove his mettle.

Govt manipulating financial figures, says Siddu

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Udaipur, Bengaluru

COMING down hard on the Union government over the state of the Indian economy, Congress leader and former chief minister Siddaramaiah said the country's financial situation was deteriorating day by day.

"The government has resorted to a vicious attempt to manipulate figures so that people do not know the facts. The Planning Commission was abolished and the NITI Aayog was constituted. The task of this NITI Aayog is to prepare the figures required by the central government or the BJP government. The Central government has stopped conducting surveys which are to be conducted fairly," he said at the Congress' brainstorming session in Udaipur, Rajasthan, on Sunday.

Giving examples, he said the National Sample Survey Office has stopped conducting surveys. It surveyed issues such as employment and presented the facts to governments. The surveys of this institution have been stopped altogether. In 2017-18, the survey was suggested to be conducted. The agency also conducted a survey, but as soon as it came to know that it was a complete contradiction to the functioning of the government, the Modi government ensured that the survey was not released. The report was to indicate that the situation in the country was heading towards extreme distress, he added.

"Unless people properly understand the country's current economic situation and raise their voices, there is no possibility of the country recovering. The central government's monetary policy is ruining the economy of the states and weakening the federal system. The debt of all the states in the country stood at Rs 24.71 lakh crore as of March 2014, but by March 2022, it crossed Rs 70 lakh crore. If the loans made in 2022 are included, this amount will be around Rs 80 lakh crore," Siddaramaiah said.

He claimed that the fiscal deficit of states is also increasing and explained that from 2012-17, till demonetisation, only four of 14 major states were facing the problem of fiscal deficit. In 2021-22, except for two states, all other states are facing the problem of fiscal deficit.

EXPRESS READ

Ulemas of coastal dists to decide on loudspeakers soon

Udupi: Karnataka State Board of AUQAF chairman Janab Moulana N K Mohammed Shafi Sa-adi said that Ulemas (the body of Muslim scholars) in the state capital have already met and decided that mosques will no longer use loudspeakers for the early morning azaan 'fajr' to abide by the Supreme Court order that bans the use of loudspeakers from 10 pm to 6 am. Ulemas of coastal districts will conduct a meeting in a day or two and announce their decision. "A right decision to fall in line with the apex court order will be taken," he told reporters in Udupi on Sunday. **ENS**

B'DAY WISHES

Congress leaders, including Priyanka Gandhi, wish Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president D K Shivakumar on his 60th birthday in Udaipur on Sunday

'Curbs, if needed, will be in Aug'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"TEACHERS and staff have been working hard to clean the schools and get the essential repair and paint works done," Nagesh said. He also lent a hand to clean a government school in Tiptur on Sunday.

There have been concerns over children starting offline classes, including the fear of the Covid fourth wave and mental challenges. "Beginning of formal schooling was unfortunately delayed for most children because of Covid restrictions. Different children within the same class would have had very different experiences of the pandemic. They will also have varying levels of coping skills and resilience in dealing with those experiences," said Shubra Johri Sinha, head of Ekya Byrathi School.

Nagesh said that restrictions, if needed for the fourth wave, will only be imposed in August.

"The schools will be instrumental in bridging the gap created by online education," said Aloysius D'mello, principal of Greenwood High International School.

Gave first speech in Gokula: CM

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"WE allocated Rs 100 crore in the budget for the comprehensive development of Anjanadri Hills in Koppal district. A decision has been taken to build a Gaali Gopura atop the Anjanadri Hill," he said, adding, all facilities, including a ropeway to reach the hilltop will be provided to tourists.

Recalling his association with Gokula village, Bommai said he had visited every house in the village and delivered his first speech in public life in Gokula. "I have not stopped speaking since then," he added in a lighter vein.

DK farmers reap rich dividends with cultivation of palm for oil

DIVYA CUTINHO @Mangaluru

NAGESH, a farmer from Dakshina Kannada district, opted to grow palm trees for oil when he was struggling to find a viable alternative crop to arecanut which was affected by yellow leaf disease (YLD). Now, he is earning up to Rs 21, 300 per tonne of palm fruit.

Many farmers like him have taken up palm tree cultivation in the district. Earlier, palm oil trees used to be cultivated in 40 hectares of land, but now it has increased to 60 hectares in Dakshina Kannada, say Horticulture Department officials.

A palm tree grower from the district said that two months ago, one tonne of palm fruit used to get sold for Rs 15,000, but now it is getting Rs 6,300 extra due to increased demand. "We are hoping that the prices will increase further," said a grower.

Prema Vasanth, another grower from Sullia taluk, said, "We get around 200 kg of produce from a tree per year. The chances of pests attacking the fruit is also very less. If there is no water for 15 days, arecanut trees die, but the palm tree survives even after 2 months of not watering. I have 1,250 palm oil trees and we get 10 tonnes of produce for every harvest. The company supplying the saplings transports the produce and the amount is directly credited to our bank accounts," she said.

HR Nayak, deputy director of Horticulture Department in Dakshina Kannada, said, "The weather in parts of Puttur, Sullia and Belthangady is suitable for palm cultivation. The demand for edible palm oil in India is around 236 lakh tonnes per year, but only 70 to 80 tonnes of palm oil is produced in the country. To meet the demand, the edible oil is being imported from Indonesia, Malaysia. There is a subsidy and maintenance cost from the government for palm tree cultivation," he said.

Tamil Nadu Health Minister Ma Subramanian, on Sunday, inspected the drug warehouse in Chennai which stores essential medicines that the State plans to send to Sri Lanka, in the first phase. The Tamil Nadu government had passed a resolution in the Assembly last month to send medicines worth ₹28 crore to Lanka

FAMILIES OF SHUTTLERS SRIKANTH, SAI RAJ ON CLOUD NINE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Guntur

IT was a moment of joy and pride for the family members of the shuttlers from Andhra Pradesh -- Kidambi Srikanth and Satwik Sai Raj Rankireddy – as the duo played a key role in the Indian team lifting the Thomas Cup.

Srikanth's father KVS Krishna said, "Honestly, I didn't expect Srikanth to win the match as his opponent Jonatan Christie is a very strong player and had defeated Srikanth twice in various tournaments this year. But it was a proud moment for us when his victory sealed the cup for India."

Krishna said Srikanth visited them before leaving for Bangkok. "Like every parent, we wished and prayed for his success. But this time, it is more than him as the tournament is not only about him, but the entire Indian team."

The proud father said Thomas Cup victory is a different feeling. "If Srikanth wins any other tournament, it would be Srikanth who would get the laurels. This is a tournament involving teams and now it is the country which gets the name. I am proud that Srikanth is part of it," he said.

His hard work and focus brought him success, he said and added Srikanth's career took a back seat in 2018 and 2019 due to injuries. However, the Covid pandemic gave him time to recoup and emerge out of the injuries with flying colours, he said.

Expressing her joy, Srikanth's mother Radha said the entire team has performed well and they are very happy that Srikanth is a part of the historic victory. "As we won't talk to him during the tournaments, I am eager to talk to him and congratulate him personally," she added.

Like every parent, we wished and prayed for his success, says shuttler Kidambi Srikanth's father KVS Krishna

Srikanth has shown excellent performance in the entire tournament and won all six matches against Kai Schaefer (Germany), Brain Yan (Canada), Wang Tzu Wei (China), Ng Tze Yong (Malaysia) in the quarterfinals, Anders Antonsen (Denmark) and Jonatan Christie (Indonesia) in the finals and played a significant role in winning the cup by defeating 14-times winner Indonesia.

Satwik Sai Raj Rankireddy, the other shuttler from AP, who paired with Chirag Shetty to win the doubles match, hails from Amalapuram in Konaseema district. Satwik's father Kasi Viswanadham expressed joy over his son's contribution to win the tournament. Viswanadham had been working as a Physical Director in a high school in Konaseema district before retirement.

Red alert in 5 Kerala dists

Pre-monsoon rain pounds state; fishermen told not to venture into sea

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ T'Puram

KERALA remains on high alert as five districts in central and northern parts are expected to receive very heavy rain on Monday. The very high rain is likely to remain scattered as it happened on Saturday night. The intensity will depend on the strengthening of westerly winds from the Arabian Sea, according to weather experts.

They pointed out that intensity of the rain remained low on Sunday as the wind speed did not pick up as forecast. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had issued red alerts in five districts in central and northern Kerala, indicating high to very high rain on Sunday. "The speed of wind remains difficult to predict. If it gains strength, there will be heavy rain on Monday. The sky will remain cloudy for two to three days," said Rajeevan Erikkulam, meteorologist of Kerala State Disaster Management Authority.

The IMD has forecast squally weather with wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph likely to prevail along and off Kerala coast till May 19. It has warned fishermen from venturing into the sea during the period.

A man and his son wade through a flooded street in Kochi on Sunday. The Ernakulam city region received 152mm of rainfall | A SANESH

ANOTHER LOW PRESSURE LIKELY

A fresh low pressure area is likely to form over the Bay of Bengal by May 19, IMD has said. However, there is a less probability that the system will intensify into a depression.

The authorities have banned visitors at various tourist spots including eco tourism centres and wildlife sanctuaries in Thiruvananthapuram till further notice.

The shutters of Aruvikara dam were lifted to 20 centimetres in the wake of the high rainfall in the catchment area. Revenue Minister K Rajan said directions have been issued to shift people in landslide-prone areas to safer places. There is already a ban on travelling at night in high ranges.

The state received heavy to very heavy rainfall as per the recordings from various weather stations till Sunday morning. Kodungallur received 20omm of rainfall while Aluva recorded 190mm and Ernakulam city region 152mm.

K'taka HC second in using 'eCourts' in lockdown

YATHIRAJU @ Bengaluru

THE Madras High Court stands first in the country among 28 high courts in hearing cases through video conferencing (VC) since the beginning of lockdown period which was imposed in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic outbreak.

According to data published by the Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India, in showcasing 'eCourt achievement', Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana, and Delhi High Courts occupy the next four places, respectively. These courts have dealt with 14.17 lakh, 6.92 lakh, 6.37 lakh, 5.20 lakh and 3.16 lakh cases, respectively.

Similarly, under the jurisdiction of 28 high courts, Delhi stands first among 28 district courts in the country in dealing with cases through video conferencing. The immediate next four courts are Allahabad, Patna, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

The number of cases heard by the district courts in the jurisdictions of these high courts are 28.79 lakh, 27.39 lakh, 17.51 lakh, 6.80 lakh and 6.73 lakh, respectively. Since Covid lockdown started, the district courts heard 1.23 crore cases while the high courts heard 61.02 lakh cases (in all 1.84 crore) till February 28, 2022 through VC. The Supreme Court heard 2.18 lakh cases till March 14, 2022 since the beginning of the lockdown period.

"VC emerged as the mainstay of the courts during the Covid lockdown period as physical hearings and normal court proceedings in the congregational mode were not possible", the Ministry of Law and Justice said in a report.

It is further said that to bring about uniformity and standardisation in using VC, an overarching order was passed

by the Supreme Court on April 6, 2020 which gave legal sanctity and validity to the court hearings done through VC.

Further, VC rules were framed by a five-judge committee which were circulated among all high courts for adoption after local contextualisation. As many as 24 high courts have implemented VC rules. Additionally, under the jurisdictions of 28 high courts, 25 district courts have adopted the VC rules as on February 28, 2022.

VC facilities have been enabled at 3,240 court complexes and corresponding 1,272 jails.

The Telangana High Court has started mobile e-courts van equipped with Wi-Fi and computers for video conferencing for speedy disposal of cases in remote areas of the state which do not have easy access to courts, the Ministry of Law and Justice said.

This apart, a novel concept of virtual courts has been introduced under the eCourts project to deal with petty traffic offence cases. As on March 3, 2022, there are 17 such courts in 13 states/UTs namely Delhi (2), Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala (2), Maharashtra (2), Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir (2), and Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Meghalaya and Himachal Pradesh.

Over 1.32 crore cases have been handled by 17 virtual courts and in more than 22 lakhs cases online fine of more than Rs 229 crore has been imposed till March 3, 2022.

EXPRESS READ

'Replace Cauvery Water Management Authority'

THANJAVUR : The Cauvery Rights Retrieval Committee (CRRC), an umbrella organisation of political outfits and farmer associations, has demanded replacement of the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) with a new one along the lines of the Bhakra Beas Management Board. CRRC coordinator P Maniyarasan said that the incumbent CWMA has not ensured monthly release of Cauvery water due for TN. CWMA chairperson S K Haldar, has been repeatedly placing the Mekedatu dam proposal by Karnataka at authority meetings. Due to opposition by TN officials the same was not taken up by discussion, he added.

Andhra HC relief to Narayana's family members

VIJAYAWADA :The Andhra Pradesh High Court Sunday directed the Andhra Pradesh Police not to take any coercive action against the family members of former minister and founder chairman of Narayana Educational Society P Narayana, who was earlier arrested in the SSC question paper leakage case, and society members, till May 18. Narayana, who served as municipal adminstration and urban develo-pment minister in the previous TDP government, was arrested by the police in the case related to leakage of SSC question paper from an exam centre in Chittoor district.

A decade after he was declared blessed and two years after his eligibility for sainthood was announced, Devasahayam Pillai was conferred sainthood by Pope Francis at the Vatican around 2.30pm (IST) on Sunday. He is the first Indian layman to be canonised. Here, the tapestry depicting Titus Brandsma (1881-1942), top, and Lazzaro alias Devasahayam (1712-1752) hangs in St. Peter's Square at The Vatican on Sunday during their canonisation mass celebrated by Pope Francis | AP

Newborn declared dead found alive on way to funeral

ENS @ Raichur

A newborn was allegedly declared dead by a doctor of a private hospital but was later found to be alive while being taken for funeral by family members on Saturday. The incident took place in Turvihal town of Raichur district.

According to sources, Amaramma, wife of Erappa, delivered a baby girl at the Government Hospital in Turvihal on May 7. As the newborn was anaemic and the hospital lacked facilities, doctors advised the couple to take their baby to Sindhanoor taluk government hospital for further treatment. The couple, however, admitted the newborn to a private hospital on May 10. After treating the baby till May 14 (Saturday), the doctors declared the baby dead.

The parents brought the body of the baby back to Turvihal and started preparations for the funeral. A family member, however, noticed the child moving while on the way to the funeral and alerted the parents, who rushed the baby to the government hospital. The doctor there confirmed that the baby was alive. the baby was admitted to another private hospital at Sindhanoor, where she is under treatment. Medical Officer, Turviahal Community Health Centre, Dr Manjunath Anagoudar confirmed that Amaramma delivered the baby at the same centre. He advised the parents to take the baby to the government hospital at Sindhanoor, but they opted for a private hospital.

After Shah's dare, TRS says no to early Assembly polls in Telangana

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

THE ruling TRS ruled out the possibility of going in for early Assembly polls. "The Assembly elections will be held as per the schedule. We are ready for the polls, if Lok Sabha is dissolved and the BJP decided to go for early polls," TRS working president KT Rama Rao said here on Sunday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, at a public meeting on Saturday, dared the TRS to go in for early.

Responding to Shah's statement, Rama Rao said the TRS was ready, if they (BJP leader) come forward for early polls after dissolving the Lok Sabha. Rama Rao averred that the "single engine" government would be defeated in the next polls. The people were ready to throw the Modi government into the dust bin, Rama Rao said.He, however, reiterated that the Assembly elections would be held as per the schedule.

Meanwhile, TRS president and CM K Chandrasekhar Rao is expected to return from his farmhouse either on Tuesday or Wednesday. He met various leaders at his farmhouse in the last two weeks to sharpen the party's strategy.

The TRS chief is expected to launch a counter attack on Congress and the BJP from May 18. Recently, AICC leader Rahul Gandhi announced "Warangal declaration". BJP president JP Nadda and Union Minister Amit Shah addressed two meetings. The Congress and the BJP leaders targetted Rao in their speeches. With this, Rao is expected resume his activity and launch a counter attack from May 18. Rao will also meet political strategist Prashant Kishor on May 18. The CM at farmhouse held discussions with the party leaders on the Rajya Sabha polls, party's election strategy, the Centre's denial to open market borrowings.

In Kerala, AAP, Twenty20 float new front

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE@ Kochi

TO take on all three political fronts in Kerala, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Kitex-backed Twenty20 on Sunday announced a formal alliance in Kerala called "People's Welfare Alliance" which vowed to work for a new political movement in the state promising welfare of the people.

AAP national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Aravind Kejriwal announced the formal alliance with Twenty20 and offered to implement all welfare schemes rolled out by his party in Delhi in Kerala if elected to power. Addressing a public meet at Kitex ground in Kizhakkambalam, he said "We offer free electricity, water, education and health care to the people in Delhi. We have stopped corruption in Delhi and ensured that the government reaches the doorsteps of the people to offer varied government services. If you want to bring a change in Kerala and get these welfare measures, you have to support us," he said.

We have stopped corruption in Delhi and ensured that the government reaches the doorsteps of the people to offer varied government services

Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi CM

CAMPUS CANVAS

Campus Challenge Awards @ PES University

PES University's Department of Physical Education and Sports management held an Awards Ceremony for the Campus Challenge organised during recently. A total of 8 games were held with 17 students bagging medals and certificates for their performances at National and International levels.

Santhosh Babu, IPS, Superintendent of Police, Ramanagara and Dronacharya and Arjuna Awardee, Jude Felix Sebastian were the chief guests. In his address, Santhosh Babu appreciated the efforts of the Sports Department in motivating students to participate in sports activities. Jude Felix complimented the University for creating a state-of-the-art sports infrastructure to boost sports activities on the campus.

Dr.M.R.Doreswamy, Chancellor emphasised the need for encouraging students to participate in sports and said that Sports is equally important as academics for students.

ALLEN Shines Again

Atul Shatavart Nadig

Pranjal Jha

Souradeep Sharmila Mandal

Atul Shatavart Nadig of Class 11th, a student of ALLEN Bengaluru's 2-year classroom program has been selected to represent India in the International Mathematics Olympiad at Oslo, Norway. Souradeep Sharmila Mandal of class 9th and Pranjal Jha of class 8th were selected for the Orientation Cum Selection Camp (OCSC) after qualifying Indian Olympiad Qualifier of Junior Science (IOQJS) conducted by the IAPT and HBCSE.

Mahesh Yadav, ALLEN South India Academic Head, acknowledged the mentoring efforts, parenting, the support system and attitude of mentees which played a crucial role.

BMSSA Students Participate in 'School Bell' Programme

As part of institutional social responsibility, sudents of BMS School of Architecture, Yelahanka (BMSSA) participated in the School Bell Painting programme in two Government Higher Primary schools located in the villages of J Venkatapura and Maralur, Chikkaballapura District.

Dr. Shaila Bantanur, Director, BMSSA spearheaded this initiative as part of the "School Bell" campaign by Campus 2 Community which aims to rejuvenate 75 Government schools to honour the Government of India's Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

US University Doctorate for M. R. Jayaram

The University of Illinois, Chicago, conferred a honourary doctorate on Dr.M.R.Jayaram of the M.S.Ramaiah Group of institutions recently. The President of the University of Illinois system, Dr. Timothy Killeen, presented the degree of 'Doctor of Humane Letters' to Dr. Jayaram in recognition of his valuable contribution to promoting higher education and healthcare services.

REVA Univ. Cricket Team Wins Devadan Cup 2022

(Standing L to R) Kushal Gowda, Pavan Yadav, Abul Hassan Khalid, Dhruv Nayak, Gautham Mishra, Bhisaj, Suraj Kamath, Macneil Hadley Noronha, Manish Kumar, Prapul T P, Amay Tejas, Preetham V K | (Sitting L to R) Premnath J G, Dr.M Dhanamjaya, Vice- Chancellor REVA University, Umesh Raju, Trustee REVA University, Dr.N Ramesh Registrar REVA University, Dr. Deepak C S, Director of Physical Education.

NMIT's Annual Techno Cultural Fest Held

Anaadyanta-2022, Nitte Meenakshi Institute of Technology's Annual National-level Techno Cultural Fest was recently organised.

Murugesh R. Nirani, Minister for Large & Medium Scale Industries was the chief guest. Prof. N.R. Shetty, Chancellor, Central University of Karnataka presided over the function.

EDITORIAL

"It's my rotten luck that this has happened to me." On the contrary, it's my good luck that, although this has happened to me, I still feel no distress, since I'm unbruised by the present and unconcerned about the future

Marcus Aurelius

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

IMPLICATIONS OF A FIGUREHEAD PM IN TROUBLED LANKA

In what can charitably be called a quirk of democracy, Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as prime minister of Sri Lanka last Thursday. The vacancy arose as his predecessor Mahinda Rajapaksa was forced to step down and flee following widespread riots after his henchmen attacked peaceful protesters. That Ranil has loads of administrative experience is indisputable since this is his sixth term as PM. But the fact that he never finished any term in office doesn't inspire confidence in the opposition at a time when Lanka is staring at a humongous financial crisis. Ranil is at his weakest this time around because he is the lone representative of his party in a 225-member Parliament. By installing Ranil, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa is apparently seeking to use him as his human shield against the tsunami of discontent on the streets that the ruling clan is facing. A no-trust vote may no longer worry Gotabaya in Parliament, as Ranil has let himself become the President's proxy. It goes without saying that the PM will have no control over a Cabinet loaded with Gotabaya's loyalists. How international lending organisations would trust his government to usher in reforms and clean up Mahinda's mess is anybody's guess. As it is, almost the entire opposition and the protesters say the new government has failed the smell test.

For an interim national government to have any credibility, the ideal candidate as PM would have been the powerful leader of the opposition Sajith Premadasa. But Sajith made his acceptance conditional on Gotabaya's resignation, so the Machiavellian President checked the Ranil box. But since Sajith had engineered a vertical split in Ranil's party and formed his own outfit, there is mutual animus, which Gotabaya exploited to install a figurehead PM.

As for India, recent murmurs of the LTTE's revival can only be disconcerting, as economic distress is a breeding ground for such elements. Also, not letting China fish in troubled waters would be the strategic priority. Ranil may be India's friend but his ability to deliver is suspect. India is going by its moral compass to build on goodwill by continuing humanitarian assistance. It ought to tread wearily by not leaning on any side till there is clarity and stability while keeping its geostrategic interests in mind.

AVOIDING PARANOIA OVER STOCK MARKET

Stock markets are not the perfect reflection of the economy, not always. They have their own universe, rules and barometers. Markets seem to either see the light at the end of the tunnel too early or gauge the coming storms too late. They have a tunnel vision—with the focus on a limited universe of listed companies—and behave accordingly. They may not always conform to our sensibilities, and can cause hope and despair in unexpected times.

Despite the second Covid wave (between March and June 2021) leaving behind death and devastation, stock markets were raging like an unbridled bull in the hope of an unabated recovery of the Indian economy. In no time, the markets had forgotten the despair of the second wave, and the Sensex had moved up 25% within six months. And now that stock markets have fallen by 13–15% in the past six months, you get to hear the noises of regret and warnings. But at least now, the markets acknowledge the risks to the Indian as well as the global economy.

To make money in the market, one may have to first accept the fact that they may go wrong in their assessments before they make course corrections, and then ride through these uncertainties, surprises and quirkiness. Retail investors can spare themselves of unpleasant surprises by being a little passive in their attitude in the markets. They need not have to be on their toes and react to every market signal, every commentary and every piece of advice. Leave that alacrity to traders and fund managers.

Not being paranoid could be the key to making money in stock markets—unless one has taken a plunge into the multiverse of futures and options trades. Of course, the economy faces uncertainties in the near future from an array of factors—local and global—and we may see a slow and painful recovery in the stock markets. But we as a country have no options but to choose the path of growth, peace and prosperity over communal politics and tensions. Markets will reap the benefits as and when it happens.

Hitherto, stability and security of the Lankan government, even if it was unpopular among sections of people, was the main guiding factor. Not anymore

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN INDIA'S SRI LANKA POLICY

V SURYANARAYAN

Senior Professor (Retd), Centre for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Madras

SOUMYADIP SINHA

In an interaction with the media on May 10, the spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs explained the basic principles behind India's Sri Lanka policy. He stated that India would be guided by the "best interests" of the Lankan people. It needs to be highlighted that he did not mention the present Lankan government. This might indeed mark a departure in India's Lanka policy. Hitherto, stability and security of the government, even if it was unpopular among sections of the people, was the main guiding factor. To illustrate, in April 1971, India rushed its armed forces to Sri Lanka after a desperate appeal made by Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike to Indira Gandhi. India's timely assistance enabled Sirimavo to remain in power. In the same way, after a request made by President Jayewardene to Rajiv Gandhi in 1987, the Indian Peace Keeping Forces were inducted into Sri Lanka. The stability of the Jayewardene government was equated with the stability and security of the country.

The spokesman added: "India will always be guided by the best interests of the people of Sri Lanka expressed through democratic processes." The implication is as follows: India has no special interest in propping up the Rajapaksa family. In other words, the government, though voted to power with overwhelming support of the people, has lost its mandate to rule because of rampant corruption, abuse of power, gross violation of human rights and scant regard for the welfare of the people. Opposition to the government was building over the past few months, but the economic crisis and galloping inflation were the catalysts that compelled the people to come to the streets.

The PM had to bow before the will of the people and has resigned. The President has appointed Ranil Wickremesinghe, UNP leader, considered to be extremely friendly to India, as PM. Ranil has a Herculean task before him. In the last parliamentary election, the UNP was routed and Ranil came to Parliament only through the national list. Given the present realities, other parties may not oppose him, because there is a consensus that Ranil has the skill to negotiate with the IMF. Some Lankans believe, not without reason, that Ranil and President Gotabaya are good friends and the PM would try his level best to bail his friend out of the difficult situation. ... Events are moving so fast that like *Alice in Wonderland*, it takes all the running you can do to remain in the same place.

Dr S Jaishankar, Minister for External Affairs, has done yeoman service by critically analysing India's foreign policy since Independence. He has pointed out the successes and failures during various phases and the necessity to bring about changes depending on the geopolitical transformation as well as our own growing capabilities and expectations. India needs to change the image of a reluctant power and maximise its options by multi-alignment, by engaging multiple players. New Delhi needs to take greater risks to achieve its goals. In the Fourth Ramnath Goenka Memorial lecture delivered on 14 November 2019, Jaishankar quoted Rabindranath Tagore: "You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water."

In a brief reference to India's Lanka policy, Jaishankar has referred to the IPKF experience as "IPKF misadventure". I have elsewhere described how the Accord itself became a source of discord, how the Indian Armed Forces, instead of protecting Tamil interests, came into clash with the Tamils, and how the IPKF had to withdraw unwept, unsung and unhonoured. What is more, instead of meeting the returning soldiers, the then Chief Minister M Karunanidhi boycotted them and accused them of killing innocent Tamils.

During his stewardship as PM, Atal Bihari Vajpayee used to say: "You can choose your friends but not your neighbours." Certain realities about the island nation need to be kept in mind if we want to understand India–Sri Lanka relations. For want of a better phrase, I would characterise Lanka's ties with India as "love-hate relations". All aspects of Lankan life—population, religion, language, political institutions, food, dress—are influenced by India. About the demographic structure, Lankan Marxist leader Colvin R De Silva once said: "All of us originated from India. The only question is when did we come." Gandhiji, in the course of his visit to Ceylon in 1927, was impressed by the similarities, and he referred to Ceylon as India's "daughter state".

The MEA spokesperson said a few days ago that India would be guided by the 'best interests' of the Lankan people. The implication is as follows: India has no special interest in propping up the Rajapaksa family

How did Lanka respond to India's gestures of goodwill? Six months after the JVP was put down in 1971, Lanka provided refuelling facilities to Pakistani aircraft that were proceeding to East Pakistan to put down the Bangladeshi nationalists. The IPKF, at heavy cost of men and materials, was able to bottle up the Tigers in the jungles of Vavuniya. The IPKF presence enabled the Lankan armed forces to put down the JVP revolt in the South. Indian presence should have earned for New Delhi the gratitude of the Sinhalese. On the contrary, it was explained as an illustration of India's expansionist designs. What is more, in an act of shortsightedness, President Premadasa provided the Tigers life-saving oxygen by giving them much-needed arms and money. Premadasa had to pay the wages of sin. The LTTE gunned him down during the May Day rally in Colombo.

India has responded magnificently to Lanka's request for assistance to overcome the present crisis, the worst since the dawn of independence. Unlike his father, the present chief minister M K Stalin has set aside his differences with the Central government; in an act of statesmanship, rare in post-Independence history, all assistance to Lanka is being sent in consultation with New Delhi. A ship containing much-needed food items, life-saving medicines, milk powder, etc., will be sent by Tamil Nadu to Lanka. The people of TN hope that the Indian High Commissioner, in consultation with Lanka's new PM, would ensure that the items reach all affected people, irrespective of ethnic origin. Will our hand of friendship be appreciated by the Sinhalese? Only time can tell.

I have repeatedly stressed that India's relations with Lanka should be based on asymmetrical reciprocity. A small story comes to my mind. A missionary group opened a school in an Adivasi area. A large number of children joined the school to learn the three Rs. At the end of the year, the school authorities decided to have a sports meet to celebrate the first anniversary. One event was the 100 metres dash. The boys were asked to assemble. "On your mark, get set and go". There was a strong boy who was running ahead of others. Everybody cheered him. But, mid-way, he stopped; the principal went to him and said: "You were running fast. You could have easily lifted the trophy. Why did you stop midway?" The boy replied: "Madam, in our community that victory is the greatest victory when we all win together." Win-win situation—that should be the guiding principle in India's relations with Lanka.

(suryageeth@gmail.com)

IS OUR NATION READY FOR INDUSTRY 4.0?

SURJITH KARTHIKEYAN

Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Finance

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) or Globalisation 4.0/Industry 4.0 is formed by technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and the internet of things (World Economic Forum). It has multidimensional aspects such as social, economic, political and cultural upheavals and may unfold over the course of modern times. This is indeed a continuation of widespread digital technologies available as a result of the third industrial revolution. This was preceded by the second one, the use of electric power for mass production, which lasted till 1920, and the first industrial revolution, wherein water and steam were a source of power. Globally, though the quality of life and global income levels have improved along with a reduction in cost of essential services and increase in overall productivity and efficiency, inequality with low-skill, low-pay and high-skill, high-pay segments prevailed leading to social tensions. The 4IR may further fuel supply-side miracles as above, paving the way for new avenues in economic growth, supported by the internet of things as a whole new experience of interconnectedness. As these revolutions have their own potential opportunities and challenges, it may be interesting to explore how governments the world over are exploring the 4IR.

Japan has initiated the concept of "Society 5.0" or a super-smart society wherein one can resolve various social challenges by incorporating the innovations of the 4IR. The emphasis is on "sustainable and inclusive socio-economic systems" to be realised by digitalisation. The internet of things, robots, artificial intelligence, big data, etc., will solve problems of ageing society, depopulation in regions, income inequality and so on, and people can focus more on creative work with full use of the five senses, collaboration and knowledge sharing. Germany, an European example where at present more than 15 million of the country's population depends on the manufacturing sector, had planned to build on its international competitiveness to explore the enormous potential of 4IR to become the leading factory-equipment supplier. 'Platform Industrie 4.0' was constituted in this regard with the involvement of 300 stakeholders from 159 organisations. Estonia, the most advanced digital society in the world, on the other hand, focuses on Industry 4.0 solutions development, specialising in helping electronics manufacturers and adopting a real-time factory approach.

Japan has formulated an act on special measures for productivity improvement wherein regulatory sandbox, promotion of industrial data utilisation, etc., are covered. Tax reduction on capital investment by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and companies actively investing in equipment and IT is another broad measure. This is coupled with subsidies for manufacturing and service of SMEs and promotion of regulatory reforms such as the "system improvements of self-driving cars". Regulatory reforms for digital platform businesses, promoting investment in infrastructure systems and technology, and partnership with private sector and academics for creating innovation are the key issues being addressed in this context. The challenges listed by Japan in this regard include concerns of "digital autocracy", influence and innovative power of social media, cybersecurity, and analysis and strategy for future unemployment figures, estimated to be around 2.4 million.

India is lagging behind in technology integration and adequate capital investment . In spite of low automation and a young workforce, absolute job losses will be the second highest in the world due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution

How is India placed? What are the opportunities and threats? Studies conducted by the World Bank, Oxford University, etc. on the relative global positioning of our country in the 4IR reveal that India is lagging in technology integration and adequate capital investment. In spite of low automation and a young workforce, absolute job losses will be the second highest in the world due to 4IR. Thus, without technology integration, India may lag in productivity as is expected to be achieved through 4IR. India may be adding 138 million new workers in its workforce in due course, which is likely the highest in the world, and it may be a challenge to step up its growth rate to compensate for both high job loss and high incremental workforce. If the country has to grow, it may have to invest heavily in adoption of new technology and reskilling/redeployment of a large share of its current workforce. The threats for India in the Fourth Industrial Revolution may be that the shift of manufacturing towards consumption centres may shrink the net exports, resulting in huge job losses in the manufacturing sector. Machine learning and AI may wipe out most of human analytics and programming-based high-end outsourcing jobs in India known as Knowledge Process Outsourcing.

However, the opportunities for India in the 4IR is that the huge middle class and working class may be sustaining consumption-based growth for many decades. Lower taxation rates in India due to a low-dependency economy may be making it an attractive choice for foreign investment. The government has already started the "Make in India" project, which may modernise the design and fabrication process in our manufacturing industry, keeping the requirements of 4IR. The government's Smart Cities project, when revolutionised with the internet of things, can enable all appliances to be connected through a network, and services will be delivered through automation. The cities that are selected strategically for this project may allow equitable distribution across the country.

Way forward: The broad challenges of 4IR globally include loss of jobs due to advanced technology, loss of privacy, digital environment footprint, inequality due to haphazard economic development, fast spread of fake news and related issues. So it is imperative for jurisdictions to continuously adapt to a new, fast-changing environment to understand what they are regulating and to be more transparent in public engagement and policymaking. The countries also need commitment to upskill the labour force in digital technology and to look at the changing threats to national and international security.

(Views are personal)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Badminton's 1983 moment

Kudos to the Indian badminton men's contingent who won the Thomas Cup by defeating 14-time champions Indonesia on Sunday in Bangkok. This is India's first-ever Thomas Cup victory. This is akin to the maiden cricket world win by Kapil's Devils in 1983 beating two-time champions West Indies. Indian sportspersons are scripting history and making a mark on the world sports map.

Ramesh S K, Ballari

India scripts history

India beating Indonesia 3–0 in the final of the prestigious badminton team tournament is a proud moment for all countrymen. The credit goes to the team and its head coach.

Sanjib Kumar Das, Cuttack

Failing the only test

This is with reference to *Congress looks to appropriate legacies of non-dynasty stalwarts* (May 15). While it is relevant for the Congress to make sure that it gives credit to leaders who did not belong to the Gandhi family, it is amusing and also tragic to see that neither the party nor the top brass has realised what the single biggest challenge to the party's future is. It is only one thing—acceptance by the people, in the polls. That is the only test in a democracy, and sadly, the party is failing in one test after the other. The chintan shivir would have been the best place for the grand old party to begin planning an alternative positioning, and thus, communicate to the people of this nation how they are better than the BJP.

Murali, Chennai

No bearing on the present

This is with reference to *Secrets in the Taj Mahal's Rooms?* (May 15). Why is modern India so engrossed with unearthing the past to look for desecration of places of worship by invaders of yesteryears, which has absolutely no bearing on the present? Ideally, the country must look into the future and ensure development. We should stop drumming up religious passions for political gains.

Dr George Jacob, Kochi

Why not open the rooms?

If the vaults of the Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple can be opened by a court order to see its contents, then why not the rooms of the Taj Mahal? What was the purpose of the PIL to open the vaults at the temple other than to see what was inside?

Harsha N Biliangady, email

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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TWEETS OF THE DAY

Akhilesh Yadav @yadavakhilesh
Removing the DGP of UP on allegation that he used to disregard govt work is a childish excuse. This has lowered the morale of the police force.

Rahul Gandhi @RahulGandhi
It is more important for the Prime Minister to speak on a film than on the genocide of Kashmiri Pandits. Terror is at it's peak in Kashmir today due to the policies of BJP.

Nitin Gadkari @nitin_gadkari
The growth of infra assets is proving to be a boon for #NewIndia. We are committed to develop world class infra which will help in socio-economic growth.

Last-mile connectivity along LAC gains pace

BRO constructing bridges and roads in remote forward areas; early opening of strategic passes is another focus area

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

BORDER Roads Organisation (BRO) is busy linking the remote and secluded areas along the northern frontier to ensure that the Indian Army is able to counter the Chinese movements which happen at 'different places very quickly'.

"We have been able to connect the major areas of all the sectors with good roads. The focus now is to launch smaller bridges and complete the arterial road links to penetrate the most difficult areas and provide the last leg connectivity," said a source in the security establishment. As tapering peaks, deep gorges and valleys make construction of road difficult, bridges in such areas play a vital link, said the source. "We are focusing on bridges especially near deep gorges in all the sectors."

The 3,488 km long Line of Actual Control (LAC) is divided into eastern sector (Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim), central sector (Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh) and western sector (Ladakh). The average height ranges from 10,000 ft at Arunachal Pradesh to over 18,700 ft at Karakoram Pass.

After the 2020 Ladakh standoff, India and China currently maintain a combined deployment of over 1 lakh soldiers along with a massive presence of tanks and artillery. Roads are integral to maintain such

heavy deployment, even as high altitude and rarefied atmosphere makes construction activities difficult.

The focus is on procurement of modern construction plants, equipment and machinery to enhance the pace of construction warranted by strategic imperatives. Understandably, the BRO's capital budget was increased by 40% from ₹2,500 cr in 2021-22 to ₹3,500 cr in 2022-23. While increased funding will be used for better upkeep of strategic roads, it will also give a major boost to construction of important roads, tunnels and bridges along the northern and north-eastern borders.

In February, the Defence Ministry informed Parliament that the BRO constructed 144.41 km of roads in Uttarakhand and 55.17 km in Himachal last year. Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim saw construction of 149.98 km and 69.46 km roads, respectively. "The focus on states bordering China will continue," said a BRO officer.

As per the BRO, 102 infrastructure projects —including the world's highest motorable road in Ladakh at an altitude of 19,024 ft — were completed in 2021-22. In December last year, the BRO launched nine bridges in J&K, five each in Ladakh and Himachal, three in Uttarakhand and one each in Sikkim and Arunachal.

The BRO also has been focussing on early opening of passes. Shingo La (16,700 ft), connecting Zanskar and Lahaul valleys, was opened on April 16, a record 50 days earlier than previous years. In Sikkim too, Zadong-Donkyala-Kerang road at altitudes ranging between 15,000-18,000 ft was opened almost two months ahead of the expected timelines.

PROJECT SUMMARY

By Dec 2021, 101 districts across 19 states had initiated the project activities. The project districts enrolled 20 L patients across 13,000-plus health facilities.

- In Phase I states, dedicated nurses for Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) work were lacking in most facilities except Telangana and Maharashtra.
- For Phase II states, most districts did not have dedicated NCD nurses at PHC level, except Chennai.

Lack of docs, nurses hobbles plan to make India BP-free

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

THE ambitious plan to make India hypertension-free is crippled by a shortage of doctors, nurses, and BP monitors. And this is when– one in four Indian adults is hypertensive. Among them, only about 10 per cent have their blood pressure under control!

The report of the India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI) states that the big picture of the ground situation was obtained through their programme, implemented in 101 districts across 19 states. More than 20 lakh patients in over 13,000 health facilities were enrolled by December 2021 to prepare the report.

In its progress report, IHCI states that 101 health facilities - PHCs and Urban-Primary Health Centres - spread over 30 districts, are functioning without any doctor. These constitute eight per cent of the total 1,339 functional PHCs and UPHCs, the report said.

Lalitpur (UP) and Ranchi (Jharkhand) were two districts where more than 50 per cent of PHCs and UPHCs did not have any doctor.

Data also showed that in these 30 districts – in which there are 71 district hospitals (DH) and sub-district hospitals (SDH) — only one doctor was available in all the 256 CHCs and Block PHCs (BPHC).

Apart from the non-availability of doctors, a lack of nurses was also detected. In seven districts, there were 167 PHCs and UPHCs functioning without any nurses. These constituted 12 per cent of 1,339 functional PHCs and UPCs.

The number of patients with controlled BP continued to increase over three years — 2,83,457 in 2021; 2,18,340 in 2020 and 64,704 in 2019.

The report that no dedicated staff nurse was posted in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, North and East Sikkim, and Mokokchung (Nagaland).

District hospitals and sub-district hospitals of Krishna, Visakhapatnam (Andhra), Muzaffarpur (Bihar), Bikaner (Rajasthan), and North and East Sikkim did not have dedicated staff nurses in place.

While 486 doctors were available at OPD in 256 CHCs and BPHCs, but only 100 nurses were posted in these centres.

Connect with people lost, no shortcut to regain trust, says Rahul

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Udaipur (Rajasthan)

NOTING that there was 'no shortcut' to revival, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi gave a call to the rank and file of his party to work hard to re-establish their connect with the masses.

"The Congress' connection with the people has been broken, we will have to accept that, we will have to re-establish that connection. The people know that only the Congress can take the country forward. This is our responsibility," Rahul said at the concluding session of the three-day *Nav Sankalp Chintan Shivir* on Sunday.

There were no short-cuts to re-establishing connect with the people, he said, adding that it is the party's responsibility to fight and stand with the people. "It is a complaint. Our entire discussion, all talks are about our internal matters...who is getting which post. Our focus is internal. In today's time this internal focus will not work, our focus should be external," Rahul said, adding that the party will have to turn its attention to the people and go to them. "Without thinking anything, be it our senior, junior leaders or workers, we should go and sit with the people."

To reach out to the people, Rahul said, a decision was made that the Congress party would go to the people by taking out a *yatra* in October. "This is the only way for us and there are no short-cuts to this. Anyone who thinks that it can be done through short-cuts it is not possible as it can only be achieved through sweat and hard work," the former party president said.

The Congress' connection with the people has been broken, we will have to accept that, we will have to re-establish that connection. The people know that only the Congress can take the country forward

Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader

Rahul also suggested a massive overhaul of the party's communication strategy to reach out to the youth in a better way. "The 21st century is about communication. And that is one area where our opponents outdo us... They have much more money and are better in communication. So, we must think about communication...completely reform our systems and communicate with the people of India, with the youngsters in a new way."

The time has come to aggressively bring a health mix of youngsters and seniors in the leadership, he added

With agency inputs

POWER GAMES

SHAHID FARIDI

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TRUMP CARD

RESERVATION GENIE OUT OF BOTTLE

The Congress party has let the reservation genie out of the bottle. By promising to take up reservation for the OBCs in Parliament and state legislatures and demanding a nationwide caste census, the party seems to have finally come up with a narrative to counter the BJP's Hindutva platform. The attempt seems to check BJP's pan-Hindu consolidation. The party hopes that its call for reservation would galvanise social groups and youth belonging to the weaker sections and that the quota narrative would divide and weaken the Hindutva narrative. Party leaders feel that its quota call would deal a body blow to the BJP's twin planks of Hindutva and welfarism. They say the Congress proposal on job reservations offers empowerment. This would be more appealing than the BJP's doles under its welfare schemes. The party feels that its promise of reservation may also help it wean away the BJP's Hindutva foot soldiers who are mostly from the weaker sections. Congress leaders, however, underlined the legal challenges in implementing its quota proposals. The Supreme Court has earlier this month stayed the Madhya Pradesh government's decision to reserve seats for OBCs in local bodies. Congress party's social justice and empowerment committee chairman Salman Khursheed said the party would explore ways to ensure that the Congress proposal on reservation passes judicial scrutiny. At the Nav Sankalp Shivir in Udaipur, party leaders appeared upbeat about the new narrative and termed it as the Mandal.2 moment in India's political history.

GOING BACK TO ROOTS

SHIVIR SEES CONG ATTEMPTS TO RECLAIM ITS LEGACY

The Udaipur Shivir saw the Congress party reclaim its leaders who have recently been adopted by its adversaries, especially the BJP and the AAP. The BJP has been trying hard to make India's Iron Man Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel its icon. The AAP, similarly, has tried to appropriate BR Ambedkar. The Congress itself has been neglecting some of its leaders such as former prime minister P V Narasimha Rao and freedom fighter Lala Lajpat Rai. The Congress party used to display its top leaders right from the days of freedom struggle at its large meetings like the AICC sessions. But the pictures of Congress icons had disappeared over the years. Udaipur Shivir, however, saw the return of large posters of past Congress stalwarts such as Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Netaji, Ambedkar, Shastri, Gokhale, Rajendra Prasad, Sarojini Naidu, Lajpat Rai, Maulana Azad, besides Tagore and Bhagat Singh. The interesting part of the posters put up at the venue was the prominence given to PV Narasimha Rao. Rao's picture was put on the same poster as Manmohan Singh. Asked why Narasimha Rao had suddenly made an appearance at Congress function, a Congress leader remarked: "You don't realise the value of what you have, unless someone else wants it."

RAT RACE

HEARTBURN OVER SHIVIR INVITATION SANS CRITERIA

Congress leaders across the country are expressing disappointment over the party's decision to invite leaders for the Nav Sankalp Shivir at Udaipur without any criteria. The party had originally sent out invitations to 400 leaders. This included All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretaries and in charges of states, AICC secretaries, members of the Congress Working Committee, heads of party's various departments and frontal organisation, Congress Legislature Party leaders in states, state Congress presidents, members of Parliament from both Houses, etc. But at the last moment, a little over 50 additional invitations were sent. This is where the party hurt its leaders around the country. While the first 400 invitations were based on some criteria, the last 50 was a random pick-and-choose. For example, Jignesh Mevani was invited from the election-bound Gujarat, but Hardik Patel was left out. Hardik has already been upset with the party. Inviting one young leader from his state and leaving him out has reportedly worked as salt on his wounds. A couple of ministers were invited from Maharashtra. This has upset their party colleagues in the state Cabinet. The big question before the party was, however, how to accommodate **Sachin Pilot**. He did not fall in any of the original criteria. But the party did not wish to hold the Shivir in Rajasthan and not invite Pilot. It was, therefore, decided to invite him as a former Union minister. So along with him, a few former Union ministers were invited. This has caused heartburn among a large number of other former Union ministers who did not get the invite.

Govt looks to finalise rules for local channels

PARVEZ SULTAN @ New Delhi

THE Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) has made yet another attempt to finalise the regulatory framework – as well as implementation – of 'platform services' offered by cable operators.

The ministry has sought suggestions and comments from the stakeholders on fresh recommendations pertaining to the framework made by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in February.

The detailed recommendations are available on the authority's portal. Any stakeholder, subscriber or cable operator may send views or feedback to the ministry via e-mail at sodas-moiab@gov.in.

Platform services commonly known as 'local channels' are localised content, programmes, news produced and provided by distribution platform operators (DPOs) or cable operators in addition to satellite channels transmitted by them.

DPO also includes direct to home (DTH) service providers, internet protocol television (IPTV) operators and head-end into the sky (HITS) operators. They sometimes source these programmes from the local content producers.

The ministry has been working to put in place an appropriate regulatory framework on the platform services since 2013 when it sought recommendations of TRAI on the issues related to local ground-based channels of cable TV operators for the first time.

Twice the consultation paper (CP) on platform services was issued by TRAI, in 2014 and 2019. It also held an open house discussion on both occasions to seek the views of the stakeholders on various matters.

NEW CHAPTER

Rajiv Kumar takes charge as the Chief Election Commissioner at his office in Nirvachan Sadan in New Delhi on Sunday | PTI

Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, who took charge as the 25th Chief Election Commissioner of India, said he wouldn't shy away from tough calls. Kumar succeeded Sushil Chandra, who demitted office on May 14. "The Commission will follow the time-tested and democratic methods of consultations and consensus building in bringing about any major reforms responsible under the Constitution," the new poll panel head told the media.

Website in name of Didi launched to take on BJP digitally

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

A mega digital plan has been launched by the Trinamool Congress to counter the BJP and propel party matriarch Mamata Banerjee as the desired opponent against PM Narendra Modi for the 2024 elections.

Launching a dedicated website and Twitter handle in Didi's name, TMC MP Derek O'Brien said the platforms will be used to bust fake news and the 'empty rhetoric' pushed by the BJP. The platforms titled 'India Wants Mamata Di' went online on Saturday.

"We made it clear that India wants Mamata Banerjee to lead the next federal government. There is no doubt that only she can challenge the political hegemony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2024," said a senior TMC leader.

With this, the TMC has sounded the poll bugle projecting Mamata Banerjee as PM face for 2024, albeit digitally.

The website describes Mamata Banerjee as the 'tigress of Bengal as well as India', with many firsts to her credit. Launching a pan-India digital campaign projecting Mamata Banerjee as the next PM, the TMC has stated that it wish every Indian enjoys good governance through her pro-people policies aimed at holistic development – by making her the first-ever Bengali PM of India in 2024.

"The projection of the TMC supremo as the prime ministerial face on all digital platforms will gradually scaled up until the next Lok Sabha elections," a TMC source said.

India-Nepal ties 'unparalleled': PM Modi says ahead of day-long visit to Lumbini

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

ON the eve of his visit to Lord Buddha's birthplace Lumbini, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** asserted that India's ties with Nepal have been "unparalleled" over the years.

In a statement on Sunday, Modi said that he was looking forward to meet his Nepalese counterpart Sher Bahadur Deuba again after the latter's recent visit to India. Both India and Nepal will continue sharing a holistic understanding to expand cooperation in multiple areas, including in hydropower, development, connectivity and others, he said.

"Our ties with Nepal are unparalleled. The civilisational and people-to-people contacts between India and Nepal form the enduring edifice of our close relationship."

In his fifth visit to Nepal after he became the PM in 2014, Modi will reach Lumbini on the occasion of Buddha Purnima on Monday. The PM is also schedule to offer prayer in the temple of Mayadevi.

As per official sources, Modi and Deuba in Lumbini will hold talks on working together in multiple areas including hydropower and connectivity.

The PM will also participate in the foundation laying ceremony for the construction of a centre for Buddhist culture and heritage in Lumbini. Meanwhile, a report released from the Nepalese foreign ministry recently stated that the Deuba will host a lunch in honour of his Indian counterpart and members of the Indian delegation.

Australia set to invest ₹1,500 cr in India

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

THE recently introduced Update to Australia's India Economic Strategy is a five-year plan for Australian government to help achieve its long-term economic ambitions in India. To implement the plan, Australia is investing over $280 million (₹1,500 crore) – towards new programs and initiatives across technology, space, critical minerals, strategic research and people-to-people links to boost cooperation with India.

"It is a clear signal of our strong ongoing commitment to the relationship and draws on consultations with over 600 business and community stakeholders across Australia and India and sets a basis for new investment," said Australia's High Commissioner Barry O'Farrell during the update's launch."This is the largest ever single boost to bilateral ties by an Australian government."

India is Australia's 7th largest trading partner. Trade was valued at Aus $24.3 billion in 2020. Over the five years leading up to the pandemic, bilateral trade and investment between the two nations doubled.

Australia hopes to lift India into its top three export markets by 2035 and make India the third largest destination in Asia for outward Australian investment.

"India and Australia share common values, complimentary economies and strong people to people links that makes us ideal trade partners," Australia's Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Dan Tehan said.

The original India Economic Strategy in 2018 stated that no country would offer more growth opportunities to Australian business than India.

"This update responds to those changes – recognising the evolving challenges and opportunities for both countries," Farrell said.

CARGO BOAT SINKS

A cargo boat sank into the Arabian sea off Ballard Pier in south Mumbai, and three persons on board were rescued soon after they jumped off when it started sinking, a police official said on Sunday

6 B'DESHIS IN ED CUSTODY IN MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	44	27	Mumbai	32	28
Bhopal	41	27	Panaji	32	29
Jaipur	41	29	Patna	39	27
Amritsar	41	27	Lucknow	41	30
Chennai	34	28	Port Blair	31	27
Kolkata	36	30	Imphal	26	20
Srinagar	26	11	Chandigarh	48	31

Rebels accuse Tikait brothers of indulging in politics; Rakesh Tikait points fingers at BJP

Rebellion jolts BKU, new faction sidelines Tikaits

Rakesh Tikait and Naresh Tikait have been the key faces behind farmers' stir

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

THE Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), which spearheaded the agitation against farm laws, was on Sunday jolted by a major rebellion when a group announced formation of a separate 'non-political' outfit and sidelined the stalwart Tikait brothers — Rakesh Tikait and Naresh Tikait.

The development took place at an event organised by the BKU to pay homage to union's founder Chaudhury Mahendra Singh Tikait on his death anniversary in Lucknow. The new outfit — BKU (Non-political) — unanimously elected Rajesh Singh Chauhan as its national president. Chauhan had been the national vice-president of the parent BKU.

Chauhan accused both Tikait brothers of indulging in politics much against the mandate of the union. "I have also given 33 years of my life to the union. After coming back from the Delhi border after 13 months of agitation, Rakesh Tikait had become politically motivated. We discussed the issue, telling him that we are an apolitical organisation and that we should not support any political party. Both the Tikaits were working under the influence of some political parties," Chauhan said.

"Why has Rakesh Tikait been meeting political leaders in Bengal and Telangana? We have nothing to do with politics," asserted state president of BKU (Non-political), Harinaam Singh Verma.

Reacting to the development, Rakesh Tikait accused the BJP of orchestrating the rebellion. He claimed that as many as 10 small outfits existed in UP.

Meanwhile, the BKU (Non-political) has elected Rajesh Singh Malik as its chairman and Mangeram Tyagi as vice-president. Rakesh Tikait, it is learnt, has been staying in Lucknow for the past couple of days to convince the rebel group, but to no avail.

DODGING FACTIONALISM

BJP likely to face Raj polls under 'Brand Modi'

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

IN a well thought-out plan amid the unabated infighting within the Rajasthan BJP, the party central leadership has decided in principle to deploy 'Brand Modi' in the next Assembly election in the state.

Vasundhara Raje

Satish Poonia

Ahead of the two-day party camp at Jaipur, from May 20 to 21, the central leadership of the saffron party is learnt to have conveyed to the state leaders about the decision to make Prime Minister Narendra Modi the central plank in the Assembly election, which is due next year.

A senior source in the BJP on Sunday said PM Modi will bear more fruits than any state leader in the polls. "State leaders, including former CM Vasundhara Raje, will soon be entrusted with election-related tasks to keep the flock together. This will happen most probably at the upcoming party camp," sources said.

Raje and state party chief Satish Poonia have been at loggerheads for a long time. Recently, at a meeting with party national president J P Nadda, all senior leaders of Rajasthan BJP were asked to work together to ensure victory for the party in the upcoming assembly election.

"The central leadership has once again communicated to Rajasthan leaders to work together and end the infighting and factionalism. The entire elections would be fought exposing the ruling Congress' failure in governance and highlighting the PM Modi's achievements," said a senior BJP functionary.

Rift in Bihar BJP could be addressed in Jaipur meet

Patna: The three-day BJP meet in Jaipur from May 19 may effect some reshuffle in the Bihar BJP. Conflict within the state BJP had intensified after the 2021 cabinet reshuffle at the Centre with two key leaders Ravi Shankar Prasad and Sushil Kumar Modi being sidelined. It is rumoured that Prasad and Modi were sidetracked to make way for the emerging 'Yadav' coterie, spearheaded by Union minister and Bihar in-charge Bhupendra Yadav, which has been attempting to reformulate the party's caste-based strategy. ENS

CHANDIGARH DIARY

HARPREET BAJWA
Our correspondent in Chandigarh
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Training on house affairs for new MLAs

With 85 first-time MLAs out of the total 117 legislators in the Vidhan Sabha, the government will soon organise a three-day training for the former lot to learn the nuances of the house. However, all the legislators will be invited for the training camp. The Punjab assembly has tied up with the Parliamentary Research and Training Institute for Democracies (PRIDE) of Lok Sabha secretariat to impart the training. The MLAs is will attend classes eight hours daily from May 31 to June 2. Eighty-two out of the 85 first-timers are from Aam Aadmi Party, while one each is from the Congress, SAD and BJP. A team of nearly eight different subject experts from PRIDE will conduct the training modules for the MLAs.

Oppn ridicules AAP MLA for hostility to cops

Loyalty came back around to haunt AAP MLA Amansher Singh Kalsi after he was greeted by derision from the opposition. Why? Because he took it out on two police officers, including a DSP, for issuing a traffic challan to one of his loyalists. The guy in question was penalised by the police for driving a motorcycle without a registration plate, following which he called the legislator. The Batala MLA in turn immediately called up the officers on their mobile phones. But they did not attend his calls. The angry MLA drove down to the spot and had an argument with cops. The video of the incident went viral, following which Congress leaders maintined that the cops were carrying out responsibilities.

Himachal Congress not to name CM face now

In the run up to the Himachal Pradesh state election, former Congress state president Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu – who was recently appointed chairperson of state campaign committee – is hesitant of being named CM face. As per him, let the party first garner adequate seats in the assembly before making key announcements. This apart, new state unit chief Pratibha Singh, wife of former CM late Virbhadra Singh; leader of opposition Mukesh Agnihotri and Solan MLA Dhani Ram Shandil are the front-runners and the party is not taking chances to announce any one as other might work against the party. These leaders too are of the view that the party might end up in the same way as it did in Punjab and Uttrakhand.

Tracks at New Haflong Railway Station buried in mud and stones on Sunday | EXPRESS

Major part of Gyanvapi video survey completed: Officials

Lucknow: A major part of the video survey of Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi was completed on Sunday in compliance with the local court order. The survey covered the three domes and main mosque area. The survey officials would continue the remaining work on Monday before submitting the report to the court on Tuesday, May 17. According to official sources, the survey team needs more time to do "detailing" of the already surveyed areas, including the basement in possession of Vyas family, which has been contesting the issue with the mosque management committee since 1880. It has one of the basements in its possession. On Monday, the area of pond for wazu (purification ritual) and some other parts of the masjid will be surveyed by the team. According to Varanasi DM Kaushal Raj Sharma, all team members of the survey commission were asked to be present at Gyanvapi on Monday morning to ensure completion of the survey. *ENS*

Will post Pandit staff in secure areas of J&K: L-G

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

THREE days after the killing of a Kashmiri Pandit employee by militants inside a government office, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday said all Pandit employees recruited under the Centre's package would be posted at secure district and tehsil headquarters.

The L-G also ordered a probe into the tear gas shelling on protesting Pandits by the police in Budgam on Friday.

Pandit employees working in the Valley have warned of mass resignation if the administration did not transfer them to Jammu or provide adequate security to them. Over 300 Pandit employees have sent their resignations to the L-G and the MHA.

Meanwhile, a delegation of Gupkar Alliance met the L-G at the Raj Bhavan in Srinagar on Sunday and apprised him about the concerns of Kashmiri Pandit employees. "We conveyed the concerns of all the Pandit community working in the Valley. We urged L-G that the Pandits working here must be provided all possible assistance so that they live here with a sense of security," said Gupkar Alliance spokesman Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami after meeting Sinha.

Besides, a BJP delegation led by J&K state president Ravindra Raina met Sinha and sought secure accommodation for the Pandits posted in the Valley. He said on their request, the L-G has decided not to accept the resignations of the employees.

Fear has gripped the Pandit employees working in the Valley after a Pandit government employee Rahul Bhat was shot dead by militants at Chadoora in Budgam district on May 12.

Road & rail connectivity hit as heavy rain wreaks havoc in Assam, 3 killed

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

LANDSLIDES, triggered by incessant rains for the past two days, claimed three lives persons in Assam.

The deaths were reported from the hill district of Dima Hasao where the rains wreaked havoc, snapping rail and road communications. Two persons were also reported missing.

The locals had sought the help of defence personnel following a landslide that flattened a number of houses at Hokai Pungchi village, 6km from district headquarters Haflong. A defence spokesperson said five persons were trapped under the debris.

The rains also triggered flash flood which washed away portions of roads, including a national highway. Roads and a railway track were also damaged by the landslides.

Tonnes of mud and stones hurtled down a hill, burying a portion of a railway track at the New Haflong station. After the several incidents of landslides, no trains are plying to and fro southern Assam and Tripura.

According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), over 80 houses were either fully or partially damaged due to landslides while around 25,000 people in six districts have been affected. It added that the floodwaters inundated 1732.72 hectares of cropland.

ASDMA said that landslides have been reported from New Kunjung, Fiangpui, Moulhoi, Namzeurang, South Bagetar, Mahadev Tilla, Kalibari, North Bagetar, Zion and Lodi Pangmoul villages in Dima Hasao.

"Railway line at Jatinga-Harangajao and Mahur-Phaiding was blocked due to landslides," it said.

The worst-hit is Cachar with over 21,000 people affected, followed by Karbi Anglong West with nearly 2,000 victims and Dhemaji with more than 600 persons hit by the deluge.

Bengali TV actor found dead

Kolkata: Bengali serial actress Pallavi Dey (25) was found dead at her apartment on Sunday morning in south Kolkata's Garfa area. She was found hanging on a cloth tied around her neck and taken to a state-run hospital where she was declared dead. Her body was sent for post-mortem and police are investigating to ascertain the reason behind the incident. Based on initial investigation, police suspect Pallavi might have committed suicide. "A final conclusion can be made only after the post-mortem report is available," said a Kolkata Police official. *ENS*

Punjab leaders urge Centre to act after two Sikh traders shot dead in Pakistan

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

POLITICAL leaders in Punjab have urged the Centre to send a strong message to neighboring Pakistan over the targeted killing of two Sikh traders in Peshawar on Sunday.

The two Sikh traders Ranjit Singh and Kuljit Singh were shot dead by unidentified armed men. The duo was engaged in grocery business at Bada Bazaar in Peshawar, northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. They were at their shops when the miscreants came and opened fire on them, said sources.

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) and political leaders from across party lines in Punjab has slammed the Pakistan government for crimes against minorities. Many also demanded the Union government to take up the matter with the neighbouring country.

Expressing grief over the incident, SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhami said Pakistan has "failed to ensure the safety of life and property of Sikhs and such incidents are happening time and again but no justice is ever delivered".

Punjab Chief Minster Bhagwant Mann condemned the incident and urged the External Affairs Minister to speak to Pakistan, while SAD president Sukhbir Singh and former president of Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee Manjinder Singh Sirsa followed suit.

Former Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh condemned the killing of two Sikhs in Pakistan on Sunday and slammed the government in the neighbouring country for only paying lip service to the community. "Another killing of Sikhs in Pakistan. 2 shopkeepers, Ranjeet Singh & Saljeet Singh shot dead in Peshawar. This is highly condemnable. I've always said @GovtofPakistan only does lip services for Sikhs without ensuring their security. Request @PMOIndia to take serious note," the former CM tweeted.

Two arrested for chit fund scam in Chhattisgarh

RAIPUR: Two persons were arrested from Rajasthan by Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon police for their alleged involvement in a fraudulent investment scheme, an official said on Sunday.

Mukesh Modi (62) and Rahul Modi (36) are accused of cheating 356 persons of ₹3-5 crore last year. On June 4, 2021, one Sandeep Singh Bhadauria from here had lodged a complaint against the duo for cheating him of ₹1.72 lakh. They have some 150 cases against their names in Rajasthan, police said. Police brought them here from a jail in Sirohi district in Rajasthan on a production warrant, he added. *ENS*

Top brass of district administration, police shunted in clash-hit Khargone

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhopal

MORE than a month after the April 10 communal violence triggered by stone-throwing on a Ram Navami procession, the state government has removed the entire top brass of Khargone district administration and police.

Three senior officials including Khargone district collector, police superintendent and additional police superintendent have been shunted.

According to the state government order, the 2011 batch IAS officer Anugraha P has been removed from the post of Khargone district collector and posted as officer on special duty (OSD) at Madhya Pradesh Bhawan, New Delhi.

The 2012 batch IAS officer and present Ratlam district collector Kumar Purshottam will be the new Khargone district collector.

Likewise, the Khargone district police superintendent Siddharth Chowdhary has been shunted to the state police headquarters as AIG. The present Satna district police superintendent Dharamveer Singh will be the new SP-Khargone.

Further, the ASP-Khargone Neeraj Chaurasia too has been shunted as AIG at the state PHQ. The present SP of Special Task Force (STF) in Indore unit Manish Khatri will be the new ASP-Khargone.

While the transfers were not isolated, but formed part of bulk transfers, according to informed official sources, the three senior administrative and police officers have been removed from Khargone, owing to inappropriate handling of the April 10 Khargone communal violence and it's after effects.

The state government and police has been under attack of opposition Congress, minority community outfits and rights bodies for "one-sided" action against Muslim community.

For some time, it has become a fashion to label my motherland as intolerant. This just proves how intolerant we are. And how much we can absorb?

Raveena Tandon, actor

Raveena defends Owaisi over Aurangzeb tomb row

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

AMID the uproar in Maharashtra over AIMIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi paying respects at the tomb of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb near Aurangabad, the controversial politician received support from an unexpected corner – actor Raveena Tandon.

Reacting to a tweet flaying Owaisi, the actor on Saturday wrote that India is a free country and everyone has equal rights to worship. "We are a tolerant race, have been, will be and will remain so. This is a free country. Worship anyone if you have to; rights are equal for all," Tandon said. "For some time, it has become a fashion to label my motherland as intolerant. This just proves how intolerant we are. And how much we can absorb?" wrote the actor, who is an active Twitter user writing and commenting on climate crisis and rights violations.

Tandon has had face-offs with right-wing outfits in the past and her relation with the saffron camp hasn't been a smooth one. In 2018 the vocal actor had said that she didn't join politics because she "always call a spade a spade". Her latest comments come at a time when all major parties in Maharashtra have been training their guns on junior Owaisi.

5
extremist groups, all believed to be defunct, to be removed from US list of foreign terrorist organisations

GLOBAL WEATHER

LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • SW: Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	30	14	SNY	Los Angeles	24	15	SNY
Colombo	29	26	TDS	Melbourne	15	8	LC
Dhaka	35	28	TDS	Moscow	14	7	HR
Dubai	39	24	SNY	New York	24	14	TDS
Houston	35	23	SNY	Singapore	30	26	TDS
Istanbul	24	14	SNY	Toronto	15	8	LR
London	21	12	LC	Washington	28	13	TDS

Russians stymied in Ukraine; Finland favours joining NATO

- Finland, Sweden becoming a part of alliance pose an affront to Vladimir Putin
- Kyiv military holds off renewed Moscow's offensive in eastern Donetsk region
- Campaign slowed to snail's pace, says western military officials

KYIV

ALMOST three months after Russia shocked the world by invading Ukraine, its military faced a bogged-down war, the prospect of a bigger NATO and a defending country buoyed by its win in a hugely popular pan-European music competition on Sunday.

Finland announced it would apply to join NATO, as top diplomats from the Western alliance, including US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, gathered on Sunday in Berlin to discuss the war. Sweden's governing party plans to announce its position on seeking NATO membership later on Sunday.

The two nonaligned Nordic nations becoming a part of the alliance would pose an affront to Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has cited NATO's post-Cold War expansion in Eastern Europe as a threat to Russia. NATO says it is a purely defensive alliance.

Ukraine said it was holding off Russian offensives Sunday in the country's east. Western military officials said the campaign Moscow launched there after its forces failed to seize Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, had slowed to a snail's pace.

'Step by step, we are forcing the occupiers to leave the Ukrainian land,' President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said. Russian and Ukrainian fighters are engaged in a grinding battle for the country's eastern industrial heartland, the Donbas. The Ukrainian military said on Sunday that it had held off a renewed Russian offensive near Bakhmut and Slavyansk, in the eastern Dontesk region. A regional official said Russian troops also made renewed attempts at a breakthrough near the eastern city of Izyum early Sunday, but were held back.

'The enemy is constantly checking the positions of our armed forces, trying to break through them, but has had no success and again suffered heavy human and equipment losses,' Oleh Sinegubov, the governor of Ukraine's Kharkiv region, wrote in a Telegram post. His claims could not be independently verified.

The assessments of Russia's war performance came as Russian troops retreated from around Kharkiv. *AP*

Hundreds of demonstrators, mainly Ukrainian refugees living in Prague, hold Ukrainian flags and placards as they take part in an anti-war protest on the Old Town square in the Czech capital on Sunday | AFP

The enemy is constantly checking the positions of our armed forces, trying to break through them, but has had no success and again suffered heavy human and equipment losses

Oleh Sinegubov, governor, Kharkiv

Kyiv praises Berlin for arms delivery

Berlin: Ukraine's foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba praised Germany on Sunday for setting a "precedent" and overcoming a "psychological barrier" by delivering heavy weapons to Kyiv. "A precedent has been set. The first psychological barrier (on handing weapons to Ukraine) has been overcome," Kuleba said in a video on Facebook. After previously limiting deliveries to defensive weapons, Berlin is ramping up shipments of heavy arms to Ukraine, sending German self-propelled howitzers to Kyiv. *AFP*

Ukraine assured open ended military support

KYIV

NATO on Sunday pledged open-ended military support for Ukraine, as Finland hailed its "historic" bid to join the alliance and with Western claims that Russia had suffered heavy losses in its push east.

The promise came after Finland jettisoned decades of military non-alignment for a bulwark against Russia, redrawing the balance of power in Europe and angering the Kremlin.

On the ground in Ukraine, Russia announced air strikes in the east, as well as in Lviv, near the Polish border in the west which has largely been spared the destruction of elsewhere.

At a meeting of alliance foreign ministers in Berlin, Germany's Annalena Baerbock said it would provide military assistance "for as long as Ukraine needs this support for the self-defence of its country".

"Ukraine can win this war. Ukrainians are bravely defending their homeland," NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg added.

Sweden's ruling party said it was in favour of joining NATO just hours after Finland's announcement, in a remarkable turnaround in political and public opinion following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Stoltenberg said the alliance would look to provide both with interim security guarantees while the applications are processed, including possibly by increasing troops in the region.

In Berlin, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he heard "almost across-the-board, very strong support" for the bids, despite misgivings from Turkey. *AP*

ASIA MATTERS

LEBANON

Mired in crises, Lebanese begin voting

Beirut: Lebanese voted for a new parliament on Sunday against the backdrop of an economic meltdown that is transforming the country and low expectations that the voting would significantly alter the political landscape. A new crop of candidates from the 2019 protest movement are running against the country's entrenched ruling class that is blamed for the collapse, hoping to unseat them. But they are divided and lack the money, experience and other advantages held by traditional political rulers. People began casting their ballots shortly after the polls opened under the watchful eye of security forces that have fanned out across the country. Sunday's vote is the first since Lebanon's implosion started in October 2019, triggering widespread anti-government protests. The voting is seen as a last chance to reverse course. *AP*

IRAN

Exporting gas to Europe being considered: Official

Tehran: Iran is considering the possibility of exporting gas to Europe, an oil ministry official said Sunday against the backdrop of soaring energy prices due to Russia's war in Ukraine. "Iran is studying this subject but we have not reached a conclusion yet," deputy oil minister Majid Chegeni was quoted as saying by the ministry's official news agency, Shana. "Iran is always after the development of energy diplomacy and expansion of the market," he said. *AFP*

PAKISTAN

3 children among six killed in suicide blast

slamabad: A suicide bomber killed three children and three soldiers in an attack on a military vehicle in Pakistan's restive northwestern region bordering Afghanistan, officials said on Sunday. The mountainous frontier separating Pakistan and Afghanistan has long been a hive of militant activity, with fighters using the porous border to escape state security forces. On Saturday evening a suicide bomber detonated in a small market near Miran Shah in North Waziristan, just 26 kilometres (16 miles) southeast of Afghanistan. Pakistan's army said three children aged between four and 11 years-old were killed in the "suicide blast" alongside three soldiers in the heavily militarised area. "The bomber came by foot and blew himself up when a vehicle of security forces passed by," said a local government official. *AFP*

Lanka's new PM extends support to protesters demanding prez's resignation

COLOMBO

IN an unusual move, Sri Lanka's new Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has extended public support to the protesters, who have been camping at a popular beachfront here for over a month calling for President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's resignation for mishandling the country's worst economic crisis.

The prime minister on Saturday said he had appointed a committee to look after the interests of the 'Gota Go Home' village protesters who have been camping at Colombo's Galle Face Green since April 9.

Wickremesinghe, who was appointed by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa as prime minister after asking his elder brother Mahinda Rajapaksa to quit, said the young protesters in the village would be safeguarded and their views would be sought for the shaping of future policy.

In an interview with the BBC Sinhala Service, the Ranil said the 'Gota Go Gama' protest should be continued to bring a change in the political system in the country and let the country's youth take the responsibility to lead.

Wickremesinghe, the 73-year-old United National Party (UNP) leader, was appointed as Sri Lanka's 26th prime minister on Thursday as the country was without a government since Monday when prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa resigned after violence erupted following an attack on the anti-government protesters by his supporters.

The attack triggered widespread violence against Rajapaksa loyalists, leaving nine people dead and wounding over 200 others.

Rajapaksa's Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna Party (SLPP) has extended their support to Wickremesinghe and almost all parties represented in the 225-member parliament have said although they wouldn't be a party to Wickremesinghe's government they would support him in his effort to pull Sri Lanka out of the current economic crisis.

Political sources said two more ministers are to be appointed to the interim Cabinet on Sunday. *PTI*

Motorists queue up to buy fuel at a Ceylon Petroleum Corporation outlet in Colombo on Sunday | AFP

'Indian media report on LTTE attack being probed'

Colombo: Sri Lanka on Sunday said it is taking all further steps to strengthen the security of the country as it investigates the report published in Indian media that the banned LTTE is planning an attack in the island nation on May 18, coinciding with the Mullivaikal anniversary that marks the end of the Sri Lankan Civil War in 2009. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who is currently facing public demand for his resignation, is the man who ruthlessly ended Sri Lanka's nearly 30-year civil war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). *PTI*

Govt lifts curfew for Buddhist fest

COLOMBO

SRI LANKAN authorities lifted a nationwide curfew on Sunday for an important Buddhist festival, but celebrations were muted as the island nation's new premier struggled to tackle the economic crisis.

A countrywide stay-home order has been in place for most of the week after a mob violence left nine dead and over 225 wounded.

Sunday marks Vesak, the most important religious event on Sri Lanka's calendar, which celebrates Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death.

The government has declared a two-day holiday and announced it was lifting the curfew for the day without saying when or whether it would be reimposed.

But the ongoing crisis prompted the government to cancel its plans to celebrate the festival, which had been scheduled at a temple in the island's south.

"Given the economic situation of the government, we are not having this year's state festival at the Kuragala temple," said a Buddhist Affairs ministry official. *AFP*

Palestinian hurt in Israel clash dies

TEL AVIV

A PALESTINIAN gunman who is the brother of a prominent Palestinian militant died on Sunday after being critically wounded in clashes with Israeli forces, according to the Israeli hospital where he was being treated.

Daoud Zubeidi was wounded in clashes with the Israeli military in the West Bank city of Jenin on Friday.

Zubeidi is the brother of Zakaria Zubeidi, a jailed Palestinian militant who briefly became one of Israel's most wanted fugitives after tunnelling out of a high-security prison last year.

He was eventually caught and returned to prison.

The police said a 47-year-old member of a special Israeli commando unit was killed in those clashes.

Daoud Zubeidi was taken to Israel's Rambam hospital where he was sedated and on a respirator and where his death was pronounced on Sunday.

Israel has been carrying out raids in Jenin and other parts of the West Bank for weeks following a spate of Palestinian attacks against Israelis that have killed nearly 20 people.

More than 30 Palestinians have been killed. *AP*

Ten killed in 'racially motivated' shooting at Buffalo grocery store

BUFFALO

A HEAVILY armed 18-year-old white man shot 10 people dead on Saturday at a Buffalo, New York grocery store in a "racially motivated" attack that he live-streamed on camera, authorities said.

The gunman, who was wearing body armor and a helmet, was arrested after the massacre, Buffalo Police Commissioner Joseph Gramaglia told a news conference.

Gramaglia put the toll at 10 dead and three wounded. Eleven of the victims were African Americans.

The gunman shot four people in the parking lot of the Tops supermarket, three of them fatally, then went inside and continued firing, Gramaglia said.

Among those killed inside the store was a retired police officer working as an armed security guard.

The guard "engaged the suspect, fired multiple shots," but the gunman shot him, Gramaglia said.

He added that when police arrived, the shooter put the gun to his neck, but was talked down and surrendered.

Stephen Belongia, special agent in charge of the FBI's Buffalo field office, told the news conference that the shooting is being investigated as a hate crime.

"We are investigating this incident as both a hate crime and a case of racially motivated violent extremism," Belongia said.

Erie County Sheriff John Garcia described the attack as "pure evil."

"It was straight up racially motivated hate crime from somebody outside of our community," he said.

When asked what information led authorities to term the attack a hate crime, Erie County District Attorney John Flynn said they had evidence indicating "racial animosity," but declined to elaborate. *AFP*

People embrace during a prayer meeting for those impacted by the Buffalo supermarket shooting | AP

We are investigating this incident as both a hate crime and a case of racially motivated violent extremism

Stephen Belongia, FBI special agent

EXPRESS READ

Tourists deny smuggling ancient shards in Iraq

Baghdad: A British and a German tourist, accused of smuggling ancient shards out of Iraq, appeared in a Baghdad court in yellow detainees' uniforms Sunday, telling judges they had not acted with criminal intent and had no idea they might have broken local laws. The trial of Jim Fitton, 66, is grabbing international attention at a time when Iraq seeks to open up its nascent tourism sector. *AP*

Nod for Cuban penal code punishing subversion

Havana: Ten months after unprecedented anti-government protests rocked Cuba, parliament unanimously approved on Sunday a penal reform opponents say is designed to quash future displays of public discontent. The new law "classifies as crimes the most serious and harmful acts for society and protects the interests of the state and the people," said Supreme Court president. *AFP*

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Lawyer who argued landmark US abortion case miffed over possible reversal

MINEOLA

THE leak of a US Supreme Court draft ruling that would seemingly overturn the landmark Roe vs. Wade decision securing a nationwide right to abortion has sparked widespread outrage — but attorney Linda Coffee is especially miffed.

Coffee is the last living member of the legal team who won the case in 1973.

"I think that's going to be awful" if the Supreme Court ultimately adopts the draft opinion published by Politico last week, the 79-year-old said in an interview.

"It's going to cost a lot more for people that don't have good health care or just the poor" to get an abortion, said Coffee, sitting in her wheelchair.

"They can't go to another state," she noted. "A lot of people can't afford the airplane."

Millions of American women could find themselves hundreds or even thousands of miles away from the nearest medical centre performing abortions, if the Supreme Court reverses Roe vs. Wade.

"I think a very large percentage of people favor retaining some form of Roe versus Wade," said Coffee, who added that "a smaller balance — of course, they're very vocal — they don't want anything."

According to a May 2021 study from the Pew Research Centre, 59 percent of Americans believe abortion should remain legal in all or a majority of cases.

If Roe vs. Wade is overturned, it will be up to each state to decide whether or not to allow abortions — and how to set the conditions.

In that case, 26 states would be "certain or likely" to ban abortions, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a US think tank that supports abortion rights. *AFP*

A woman listens to speakers at a protest and rally for abortion rights held in Seattle on Saturday | AP

₹25,200 cr — Foreign Portfolio Investors have pulled out from the markets in May so far, as per depositories data

Investing vs trading in equities

As the capital markets offer opportunities to grow money, they also bear risks

CAUTION FOR RETAIL INVESTORS

- Experts say one should invest with a horizon of at least **5-7 years**
- Short-term investments are risky and don't help grow corpus
- In speculative trading, retail investors suffer most when markets fall

- Small investors don't have the advantage of first-hand information, which professional investors have

BIVEKANANDA BISWAS
@New Delhi

STOCK market attracts the younger generation for its potential to provide higher returns as compared to the traditional financial instruments. Gen-Z wants to make money quicker, as they have bigger dreams than their prior generations. However, as the capital markets offer opportunities to grow money, they also bear risks. Only a few gain from the markets, and the rest lose.

As Covid pandemic locked everyone inside their homes, a record number of people ventured into stock markets for the first time and that boosted share prices to unprecedented levels in 2021. However, markets across the globe, including India's, trade in the red in 2022 due to various factors such as Russia-Ukraine war and high inflation rates, among others, thereby many short-term investors losing their money.

According to a Sebi statistics, the number of demat accounts had more than doubled to 7.7 crore as of November 2021 from 3.6 crore in March 2019.

As of May 13, BSE Sensex is down over 10% (54,835.58), NSE's Nifty50 too tumbled nearly 10% year-to-date (YTD). IT, banks, and most other sectors were trading lower YTD. So, who lost most in this losing streak?

Who are these new investors?

Most of them were retail investors, and a majority of them possibly new investors who had idle funds and they invested that in markets to earn better returns. This author came across many such people who had invested in the market during lockdown, as they had surplus money, for not having to pay rent and other expenses. Many others whose businesses were shut and they had investible money, so they had put that in markets. When lockdown eased and economic activities started, they needed that money and they had to exit in loss.

Prabhat Mohanty, a corporate executive who lives in Mayur Vihar, said he initially made around ₹1 lakh in 2021 and added more stocks at high price, but lost all the gains in choppy trades this year

The stock market bug also bit businessmen like Arun Sharma, who runs a stationary shop in Acharya Niketan market in Mayur Vihar phase-I. When lockdown forced Sharma to keep his shop shut for months, he had some excess money, which he wanted to put in use so that he could meet his daily expenses. One of his friends advised him to trade in stock market. Sharma started trading in November 2020.

"My shares were doing well initially; some stocks were in gain and some in loss. In my portfolio, I had majorly IT stocks, which didn't do well and moreover, I needed the money when everything was opening. So, in some stocks I had to take a cut. Though my overall loss is not that big, I am still in the negative," says Sharma.

Trading Vs investing

Investment experts say short-term trades in equities are gambling where one can gain or lose as they are very unpredictable in nature. Therefore, such kind of investments don't help much to grow ones' corpus in longer term.

Last month, there was a word of caution from ace investor and Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett for retail investors who are not privy to the market manipulations.

Buffett, in Berkshire Hathaway annual general meeting, lambasted Wall Street for encouraging speculative behaviour in the stock market, effectively turning it into a "gambling parlor."

The 91-year-old investor said Wall Street makes money catching the crumbs that fall off the table of capitalism and they make money when people are gambling than when they are investing.

Experts say stock markets offer immense opportunity to make money, but one should not fall prey to the speculations and greed. They advise one should invest in equities with a horizon of at least five years.

Rishabh Parakh, a chartered accountant and personal finance expert, said he advises investors to put money with a horizon of at least seven years. "In the short term it's a gamble, as it is difficult to predict anything." Market analysts say that one should invest in good businesses that have potential to grow over years, instead of going after speculative trades. Investment is a calculated accumulation of wealth over a longer period of time to meet future needs and when one is not going by that philosophy that might not be an investment, Parekh opined.

Kumar Binit, founder and CEO of financial product platform FinnApp, says, "It takes time to realise the profit in a big company, as businesses invest for long period of time, just like your own business it takes time." "Our platform advises investors to invest in good business at least for five years." Returns of Sensex companies have grown multiple times over the past five years. India's largest conglomerate, in terms of market cap, Reliance industries has given nearly 300% return in the past five years, while India's largest software company TCS has given 191% in the same period. India's largest bank SBI returned 62.97% to the investors in past five years.

Jitendra Solanki, a SEBI-registered investment expert based in Noida, said speculative trades are as bad as betting in casino, as chances of losing money is maximum there and that is where the difference lies between a gambler and an investor.

Should new traders bet in future and options?

On this, Parekh said futures and options trading are hedging instruments that help traders protect their money when markets are volatile. However, trading in these segments is only advisable for professional traders, he added.

LEARN ABOUT MARKETS TO OVERCOME FEAR

RAJAS KELKAR

THE sharp slump in the stock market has got everyone to arrive at conclusions. 'Dooms day' theories floating around social media and in the press are galore. A section of writers is going to the extent of calling out the death of capitalism and stock markets. Whenever there is panic, emotions fly around thick and fast.

Some voices warned of an imminent fall when share prices move upward irrespective of weak fundamentals driven by cheap money. Yet, near-zero interest rates in rich countries drove asset prices higher and higher. The so-called easy money unleashed to tide over the pandemic was the reason. Printing money cannot be an endless exercise. Governments cannot borrow money and not think about repayment. At some stage, the cycle had to turn.

In all fairness, central banks in the US and Europe gave enough warnings to markets about the tapering of bond purchases. The US Federal Reserve, America's central bank, bought bonds at low-interest rates and released money into the system. However, these bond purchases will slow now. At the same time, interest rates would be raised sharply to curb the money supply and check inflation.

In India, the consumer price inflation was at the highest level last week in eight years. The monetary policy committee of the Reserve Bank of India has already hiked rates and increased the necessary reserve ratio to absorb surplus money from the system.

However, significant drivers of inflation in India are the prices of international oil and food. While oil prices are moving in a range now and not surging, food prices are rising despite India producing record food grains every year thanks to the normal monsoon. For example, India was supposed to export wheat as global supplies were hit due to the war in Ukraine. Russia and Ukraine account for more than a third of global wheat exports. India consumes most of the wheat domestically and is not an active exporter. A few months ago, prime minister Narendra Modi suggested that farmers should seize the wheat export opportunity. However, the government announced a ban on wheat exports last week. That tells the story of the government trying to secure supplies to the domestic market to curb a surge in wheat prices.

INFLATION - THE ENEMY

Inflation is the enemy of money. It eats into the value of your wealth. However, you need to invest in firms whose share prices are beaten down but can win over rising inflation.

EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

The action also indicates that things are unlikely to be expected in the global food supply situation as Russia continues to pound cities in Ukraine. Besides wheat, Russia and Ukraine are vital players in the global edible oil, seeds and corn supplies. Overall, it is terrible news.

What you must do

The turmoil in the equity markets is likely to continue as foreigners pull out more money from markets like India. You need to arm yourself with adequate knowledge to understand the cyclical nature of markets. When share prices move, there is no one reason for that change. It depends on your ability to understand the underlying factors.

It is also about your temperament. If you observe the long-term trend in the stock market, share prices tend to move in line with the profits of businesses. If companies do good business and make money, share prices toe the line despite shock events like the Covid-19 pandemic, supply constraints due to trade wars, geopolitical tensions, and other natural or artificial disasters. There are many new investors in the stock market. They are either investing directly or through mutual funds or index funds. Equity investing is not about the short-term. Your money needs time to grow.

As a new investor, you must focus on learning about factors that influence share prices.

Inflation is the enemy of your money. It eats into the value of your wealth. However, you need to invest in companies whose share prices are beaten down but can win over rising inflation. These businesses have a strong balance sheet and can continue to sell their goods or services despite rising costs. Such companies have a 'pricing power in the market. They are good at things they produce and serve their customers well. You must learn to shepherd your thoughts towards such businesses in times of turmoil.

(The author is the editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

MONEY-WISE

FLEXIBILITY UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

IN the previous column, we had initiated a discussion on how the sub-category of Flexi-Cap Funds came into being well after the intital categorization of Equity Mutual Funds by SEBI, their characteristics and points of differentiation with Multi-cap Funds. In this column, we shall cast a glance at some of the funds on offer in this category for investors and how they have performed over different time frames up to five years.

These Flexi-Cap funds that we have randomly selected to place under the spotlight include Edelweiss Flexi Cap Fund, L&T Flexi Cap Fund, Kotak Flexi Cap Fund, DSP Flexi-Cap Fund and SBI Flexi Cap Fund.

FINANCIAL ADVICE

ASHOK KUMAR
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Edelweiss Flexi Cap Fund has an AUM of ₹926 Crore and its current Asset allocation mix is nearly 72% in Large Cap, 22% in Mid Cap and 6% in Small Cap. Its top equity holdings are in the Financial Services, IT and Consumer Goods Sectors. The performances of this fund over a 1-year, 3-year and 5-year time period are 8.35%, 13.66% and 10.61% respectively.

L&T Flexi Cap Fund has an AUM of ₹2,797 Crore and its current Asset allocation mix is nearly 67% in Large Cap, 21% in Mid Cap and 12% in Small Cap.

Its top equity holdings are in the Banking, Software and Finance Sectors. The performances of this fund over a 1-year, 3-year and 5-year time period are 4.94%, 11.19% and 7.84% respectively.

Kotak Flexi Cap Fund has an AUM of ₹36,463 Crore and its current Asset allocation mix is nearly 78% in Large Cap, 20% in Mid Cap and 2% in Small Cap.

Its top equity holdings are in the Financial, IT and Oil & Gas Sectors. The performances of this fund over a 1-year, 3-year and 5-year time period are 5.56%, 11.69% and 9.57% respectively.

DSP Flexi Cap Fund has an AUM of ₹7,538 Crore and its current Asset allocation mix is nearly 60% in Large Cap, 24% in Mid Cap and 12% in Small Cap. Its top equity holdings are in the Banking, Software and Finance Sectors. The performances of this fund over a 1-year, 3-year and 5-year time period are 1.62%, 14.84% and 10.46% respectively.

SBI Flexi Cap Fund has an AUM of ₹15,449 Crore and its current Asset allocation mix is nearly 63% in Large Cap, 14% in Mid Cap and 13% in Small Cap and others. Its top equity holdings are in the Financial Services, IT and Consumer Goods Sectors.

The performances of this fund over a 1-year, 3-year and 5-year time period are 8.85%, 14.01% and 10.69% respectively.

What is interesting to note is that the above funds not only have varying AUM sizes but also have a diverse allocation mix across market capitalizations and accord higher weightages to different sectors, thus varying their risk-reward ratios.

Investors would do well to study these patterns well or seek professional advise before making an investment.

EXPRESS READ

Constraints in domestic coal availability: Govt

New Delhi: The country is facing constraints in the availability of domestic coal and the rest of the dry fuel demand needs to be met with imports, according to the coal ministry. The coal ministry has also emphasised that the coal block holders -- both captive and commercial -- have a major role to play in mitigating the coal shortfall situation in the country. The domestic coal production is about 800 million tonnes (MT), according to the coal additional secretary.

Adani to acquire 49% stake in Quint

New Delhi: AMG Media Networks, a unit of billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate Adani Enterprises, will pick a 49% stake in Raghav Bahl-curated digital business news platform Quintillion Business Media Pvt Ltd for an undisclosed sum, according to a regulatory filing. Earlier in March, Adani Enterprises announced its foray into the media business by acquiring an unspecified minority stake in Quintillion Business Media Ltd (QBML).

Nifty may test key support of 15,671 amid LIC listing on Tuesday

RAM SAHGAL @Mumbai

STOCK market investors and traders brace for a tough week ahead with the benchmark Nifty 50 index perched just above a crucial support of 15671.45, the March low following the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The LIC listing on May 17 will be keenly eyed amid the volatility.

A decisive break below this level could potentially drag the Nifty down another 4% to 15031, said analysts. On the upside the immediate resistance kicks in at 16210, followed by 16484.

Overall, with the Nifty small-cap 100 in a bear market and the Nifty 500 below the March low, analysts expect greater chances of a downside rather than the other way. Any bounce would be sold into.

"The odds of Nifty testing its March low have shortened," said Rohit Srivastava, founder, IndiaCharts. "Even if the market bounces, it will be a sell-on-rise one." A higher than expected rise in April consumer prices to 7.79% and a weaker currency, have raised fears of the Monetary Policy Committee raising rates aggressively.

"In absence of any positive catalysts, indices are expected to remain under pressure as selling emerges on every bounce. Investors are therefore urged to remain on the sidelines since it is preferable to wait out the storm than to go bottom fishing during such turbulent phases," said Yesha Shah, Head of Equity Research, Samco Securities.

The Nifty rose from a multi-year low of 7511.1 on March 24, 2020 as the Pandemic surfaced through a record high of 18604.45 on October 19, 2021. From there it has corrected to 15782.15 on May 13, 2022.

PUBLIC SECTOR BANK FRAUDS FALL

Frauds in PSBs dip 51% to ₹40,295 crore, says RBI

NEW DELHI: Public sector banks reported over 51% dip in the amount involved in frauds to ₹40,295.25 crore during the financial year ended March 2022, the Reserve Bank of India has said. The 12 PSBs (Public Sector Banks) had reported frauds worth ₹81,921.54 crore in preceding fiscal 2020-21, the Reserve Bank has said in response to an application under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

However, the number of fraud cases didn't fall at the same pace as a total of 7,940 frauds reported by the PSBs in 2021-22, against 9,933 incidents reported in FY21, said the RBI's reply to Madhya Pradesh-based RTI activist Chandrashekhar Gaur. According to the RBI data on frauds reported by PSBs in all categories during FY22, the highest amount of ₹9,528.95 crore was reported by the city-based Punjab National Bank (PNB), involving 431 such incidents.

The country's largest lender State Bank of India reported frauds worth ₹6,932.37 crore in as many as 4,192 cases. *PTI*

Adani to acquire Holcim cement assets for $10.5 billion

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @Mumbai

THE Adani Family, through an offshore special purpose vehicle, has entered into definitive agreements for the acquisition of Switzerland-based Holcim's entire stake in Ambuja Cements Ltd and ACC Ltd, including an open offer consideration, for around $10.5 bn. This will make it the country's second-largest cement producer after UltraTech Cement.

The New Indian Express in its edition dated May 11 said that Adani was likely to clinch the deal.

Holcim, through its subsidiaries, holds 63.19% in Ambuja Cements and 54.53% in ACC (of which 50.05% is held through Ambuja Cements).

The deal is the largest-ever acquisition by Adani, and India's largest ever M&A transaction in the infrastructure and materials space.

"Our move into the cement business is yet another validation of our belief in our nation's growth story," said Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group.

".... India also continues to be the world's second largest cement market and yet has less than half of the global average per capita cement consumption. In statistical comparison,

China's cement consumption is over 7x that of India's. When these factors are combined with the several adjacencies of our existing businesses that include the Adani Group's ports and logistics business, energy business, and real estate business, we believe that we will be able to build a uniquely integrated and differentiated business model and set ourselves up for significant capacity expansion."

Jan Jenisch, CEO of Holcim Limited said, "...I would like to thank our 10,000 Indian colleagues who have played an essential role in the development of our business over the years with their relentless dedication and expertise. I am confident that the Adani Group is the perfect home for them as well as our customers to continue to thrive."

With India's cement consumption at just 242 kg per capita, as compared to the global average of 525 kg per capita, there is significant potential for the growth of the cement sector in India.

Ambuja Cements and ACC currently have a combined installed production capacity of around 70 mn tonnes per annum.

The two companies are among the strongest brands in India with immense depth of manufacturing and supply chain infrastructure, represented by their 23 cement plants, 14 grinding stations, 80 ready-mix concrete plants and over 50,000 channel partners across India.

A BEAUTIFUL RESULT, OVER TO OLYMPICS

CLENCHED-FIST yells, goosebumps, unbridled joy of achieving the unachievable and myriad emotions are some moments that define sports. Those moments will remain etched in the memory to give hope when there is despair; joy when there is none, belief in the face of failure. The sight of the Indian team breaking into unrestrained jubilation with song and dance after winning the Thomas Cup for the first time in the country's history only shows the enormity of success. And, of course, the beauty of sport.

Though winning the Cup could be considered an oddity but when it comes to achievability of the target, there was always a chance, maybe a whiff of it. Yes, there were naysayers, but there were believers too. India had to surmount obstacles but, hey, sports is all about stumbling and getting up. Once India fielded their strongest team, winning became possible. For the novelty of record, Indonesia, the team India beat in the final on Sunday, had won 14 titles already. Having an Olympic medallist (Anthony Ginting) as well as world champions (Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan) in the mix meant they began as slight favourites. Odds shifted in favour of India once they beat the indomitable Danes in the semifinals.

The challenge this year was led by veteran Kidambi Srikanth, emerging champion Lakshya Sen, fighter HS Prannoy, doubles exponents Satwiksairaj Renkireddy and Chirag Shetty and the supporting cast of Dhruv Kapila, MR Arjun, Krishna Prasad Garaga, Priyanshu Rajawat and Vishnuvardhan Goud Prajala. Thomas Cup is not just about individual talent, it's about the team. In terms of depth, perhaps this is one great example. India didn't always have it. It took some years. With the emergence of Lakshya and the duo of Satwik and Chirag, the team had the ability for a collective hurrah. Let's not discount Badminton Association of India and its think-tank's efforts too.

Badminton always showed promise. After Saina Nehwal's Olympic bronze in London 10 years ago and the foresight of untiring chief national coach P Gopichand, the sport was destined for greater heights. In the women's, India continued its progress with PV Sindhu's exceptional performances at the Olympics and Worlds. But in men's, there was no medal to show at the Olympics. In the World Championships and Super Series events, however, they were recording wins. Thomas Cup remained a Holy Grail, something that India could only dream about. Gopichand always believed that the top players should be playing in the Thomas and Uber Cup. Last year's Olympics was not as smooth for men. In the run-up to the Olympics, there were issues, from coaches to support staff. After Olympics, there were calls for changes, even in BAI's administrative setup. Processes and systems were in place but needed overhaul. They hired the right coaches for the players. For instance, when doubles coach Mathias Boe's contract got over, the two were still consulting him through zoom sessions before he was hired just before the Thomas Cup. The two won their first Super Series 500 title this year and have been consistent.

Another heartening thing is the age of the team. On the one hand, there is Lakshya at 20 and on the other there was Prannoy, nearing 30 years, and Srikanth who is 29. Satwik is 21 and Chirag is 24. The rest of the team too is young and as time goes by, this generation will gain more experience. This would also augur well for the next Olympics (2024), an event in which Indian men have punched below their weight. Like U Vimal Kumar, one of the coaches of the team in Bangkok rightly pointed out, it was a team effort and that the two senior players motivated the youngsters and shouldered the responsibility. "It was a fantastic team effort including the coaches," he said. Like Vimal pointed out, there was bonhomie in the team. The seniors guiding the juniors, the coaches strategising and contributing and everyone coming together for this extraordinary victory. All well but challenges remain. Perhaps, this is just a precursor to bigger achievements for men in the future. And Olympics is just two years away.

What a historic day! An incredible achievement by an incredible Team India to win the #ThomasCup for the first time ever!! Bounced back from tough situations on numerous occasions to win Gold. Kudos to all the players and coaches. Champions, all of you!

Abhinav Bindra, Olympic gold medallist shooter

Congratulations TEAM INDIA Men's Team for winning the THOMAS CUP Title ' Great win

Saina Nehwal, Olympic bronze medallist shuttler

HOW HISTORY WAS MADE

After losing his earlier games, Lakshya Sen comes good, gives India 1-0 lead

Satwik and Chirag save four match points to win the doubles contest

Srikanth and Prannoy's unbeaten run crucial to team's cause

HEADLINE MAKERS

LAKSHYA SEN'S CALM DEFENCE

Anthony Ginting engages opponents in (very) fast exchanges. After the first game, Lakshya may have well have been excused for wondering what hit him. However, he refocused, doubled down on his defensive prowess and produced the goods across two tight, very high-quality games.

THOSE 4 MISSED MATCH POINTS

20-17 and 21-20. Kevin Sanjaya and Mohammad Ahsan will ruefully think about those two scores in the second game for a few nights. They had four match points to transfer pressure back on India but lost their nerves. Conversely, Satwik and Chirag held theirs to close out a very tight match.

PHOTOS: AFP/AP

SRIKANTH ROLLING BACK THE CLOCK

The one constant in India's pendulum-swinging, roller-coaster of a tournament has been Srikanth's calming factor. Coming into the match, he was 5-0. No wonder then that he dealt with the threat of Christie with relative ease. Even when Christie had a game point, he was always in control.

Congratulations Team India on scripting history by winning #ThomasCup, first time in the 73-year-history of this prestigious badminton team tournament.

Himanta Biswa Sarma, BAI president

ANMOL GURUNG @ Chennai

"NO words to describe. Best achievement in Indian badminton history." Best indeed, at least in men's. That was India coach U Vimal Kumar's reaction after the men's victory over heavyweights Indonesia in Bangkok. After years of toil, the men's team wrapped their hands around the Thomas Cup for the first time ever on Sunday. For a man who has seen the highs and lows of Indian badminton, this weighty assessment aptly describes the team's surreal journey this time.

No superlatives would do justice to India's magical tale. A tale that was waiting to unfurl. A tale of sweat and toil. They were termed underdogs but the way Indians operated in the last few days, going on to overpower teams like Malaysia and Denmark along the way, is extraordinary. On the decisive day, it was Lakshya Sen (first rubber), doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty (second rubber) and Kidambi Srikanth (third) who fought like warriors possessed, hypnotizing their opponents before paralysing them.

First on the court was Lakshya. India needed a winning start to reinforce belief. That's what he did. Despite being outplayed in the first game, he did not give up. He slipped, slid and crawled, in short, did everything to claw back into the game. India needed the win badly, a perfect start. His mental toughness saw him through.

Chirag and Satwiksairaj delivered what was required of them, playing against Indonesia's strongest suits. At one stage, they seemed dead and buried and had three match points against them. Yet again, they made a Houdini-style escape. When the winning point was secured, Chirag went shirtless, soaking in the winning moment, while Rankireddy was yelling as if there was no tomorrow. India had 2-0 advantage and the edge.

Srikanth, who had an incredible run, went monk-like, vanquishing his younger Indonesian opponent Jonatan Christie. Like Vimal, even for Srikanth the winning feeling was yet to sink in. "I think it will take a while before we realise what has happened. At the moment, I rate this as one of my biggest wins," Srikanth said. Srikanth certainly stepped up during the event, acing all the six ties that he featured in. His form was certainly one of the driving forces behind India's historic run. "I did well in the World Championships last year. I'm happy with the way I'm playing."

The manner in which Lakshya has evolved has added a different dimension to the team. Even though he lost his last two ties, it was Lakshya who set the tone on Sunday, laying the platform for the rest by outwitting a formidable rival in Anthony Ginting, a World No 5. Having the likes of Srikanth and HS Prannoy, two experienced pros, aided Lakshya and the rest of the young players in the side.

As was evident in the third rubber, the continuous rise of Satwiksairaj and Chirag has also massively bolstered the team and they had entered the event with loads of belief. Prannoy's direct selection, based on his form, also proved to be a masterstroke as he delivered when it mattered.

THE NUMBERS THAT MATTERED

0 SRIKANTH LOST ZERO MATCHES DURING THE WEEK (6-0)

1 THIS IS INDIA'S FIRST-EVER THOMAS CUP TRIUMPH

6 INDIA BECOMES THE SIXTH NATION TO WIN THE THOMAS CUP

Results (Final) India beat Indonesia 3-0 (Lakshya Sen bt Anthony Ginting 8-21, 21-17, 21-16; Satwiksairaj Rankireddy/Chirag Shetty bt Mohammad Ahsan/Kevin Sanjaya 18-21, 23-21, 21-19; Kidambi Srikanth bt Jonatan Christie 21-15, 23-21).

IPL CORNER

GT too good for CSK

MUMBAI: Gujarat Titans extended their winning run in the ongoing edition of the IPL with a 7-wicket win against Chennai Super Kings in Mumbai on Sunday. Ruturaj Gaikwad scored 53 runs from 49 balls but the rest of the batting collapsed as Chennai finished with 113/5, which Gujarat chased down with ease in 19.1 overs. **Brief scores:** CSK 133/5 in 20 ovs (Gaikwad 53, Jagadeesan 39 n.o; Shami 2/29) **lost to** GT 137/3 in 19.1 ovs (Saha 67 n.o; Pathirana 2/24).

TODAY'S MATCH

PBKS VS DC

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS AT **7.30 PM,** NAVI MUMBAI

RR trump LSG by 24 runs

MUMBAI: Opting to bat, Rajasthan Royals posted 178 for 6 in their Indian Premier League match against Lucknow Super Giants here on Sunday. Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal top-scored for RR with 41 off 29 balls while Devdutt Padikkal and captain Sanju Samson chipped in with 39 and 32, respectively, helping them finish strong in the death overs. In reply, Deepak Hooda scored a 39-ball 59, but LSG fell short by 24 runs in the end.

Brief scores: RR 178/6 in 20 ovs (Jaiswal 41; Bishnoi 2/31) **bt** LSG 154/8 in 20 ovs (Hooda 59; Boult 2/18).

EXPRESS READ

Nikhat, Parveen & Anamika in quarters

NEW DELHI: India's Nikhat Zareen (52kg), Parveen (63kg) and Anamika (50kg) eased past their respective rivals to storm into the quarterfinals at the 12th edition of the IBA Women's World Boxing Championships in Istanbul on Sunday. Appearing in the ring as the first Indian, Nikhat (52kg) made light work of her Mongolian rival Lutsaikhan Altantsetseg by a unanimous 5-0 verdict.

Indians clean-sweep women's 25m pistol

NEW DELHI: Indian shooters made a clean sweep of the women's 25m pistol competition on the penultimate day of the ISSF Junior World Cup in Suhl, Germany, to consolidate their lead at the top of the medal tally on Sunday. Rhythm Sangwan won gold, Manu Bhaker silver and Naamaa Kapoor bronze. Shivam Dabas won India a silver in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions junior competition.

Berrettini pulls out of French Open

NEW DELHI: Eighth-ranked Matteo Berrettini withdrew from the upcoming French Open as he continues his recovery from surgery on his right hand. The Italian announced in late March that he was having minor surgery. He wrote on Saturday on Instagram that he's making good progress but not quite ready to return yet. The French Open starts on May 22. Berrettini reached the quarterfinals last year.

City keep title in their hands, Spurs go 4th

LONDON: Manchester City came from 2-0 down to salvage a vital point in a 2-2 draw at West Ham to keep the Premier League title in their hands as Tottenham moved into the top four on Sunday. Pep Guardiola's men travelled to the London Stadium knowing they needed a maximum of four points from their final two games of the season to guarantee a fourth title in five years.

Kenya's Kipkorir and Cheptai steal show

ASHIM SUNAM @ Bengaluru

THE continuous overnight rain made one wonder if the elite men and women racers would be able to deliver their best in the 14th edition of the TCS World 10k Bengaluru on Sunday. With the rain stopping just an hour before the women's start, the route was still wet and some areas witnessed a few puddles on the road as well.

Despite the conditions, Kenya's Nicholas Kipkorir and Irene Cheptai stole the show, setting a new course record enroute to their gold medal in the elite men and women's category. The former clocked 27:38s to break Geoffrey Kamworor's record (27:44) of 2014 while Cheptai finished at 30:35 to smash late Agnes Tirop's record of 31:19. Interestingly, Kipkorir trains alongside the previous record holder in Kenya. Amongst the Indians, Parul Chaudhary and Abhishek Pal won gold with a timing of 34:38 and 30:05 in the women and men's competition.

Kenya's Nicholas Kipkorir set a new course record in the elite men category, clocking 27:38s to break Geoffrey Kamworor's record (27:44) of 2014 | SHRIRAM BN

"When I reach back home in Kenya, I will tell Geoffrey about this new record of mine and I hope he will be happy for me," said Kipkorir, who felt he was in good shape for the race in Bengaluru.

The men's competition among the foreigners was tight with the other two podium finishers — Ethiopia's Tadese Worku (27:43) and Kenya's Kibiwott Kandie (27:57) breaking the 28-minute mark as well. However, it was not a walk in the park for Kipkorir, who was constantly challenged by Worku. Early on, it was Reynold Kipkorir, who was leading the race for the first half, but Kipkorir, running alongside Worku, felt the need to push and did so in the last two kilometers, and especially in the final 300m at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium, which played an important role in achieving a new record.

"I was not expecting to break the course record because at the halfway stage or so, I felt that it was too slow (timing). I tried to stay with Tadese (Worku) around the eight km mark and then I began to push further," said Kipkorir.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

GOODBYE SYMMO

An outlier — that's who Andrew Symonds was. Having broken into the Australian side in late 90s, even the most-dominant side back then wasn't ready for the aggressive brand of cricket he played till 2003. The two-time World Cup winner, now 46, died in a car accident in Queensland on Saturday — the third untimely death of an Australian legend after Rod Marsh and Shane Warne. A look at some of the memorable moments from Symonds' career that had its share of highs, lows and controversies...

	Mat	Runs	Wickets
Tests	26	1462	24
ODIs	198	5088	133
T20Is	14	337	8

OWNING THE BIG STAGE

Ahead of the 2003 World Cup, Ricky Ponting made one of the biggest decisions of his tenure, dropping his predecessor Steve Waugh for Symonds. And Australia were in trouble in their opening game against Pakistan, reeling at 86/4. In came Symonds, and smashed an unbeaten 143 off 125 balls, taking them past 300. From thereon, he never looked back.

The Monkeygate saga

One of the darkest moments in his career was the incident in Sydney where he complained that Harbhajan Singh racially abused him on the field. While initially Harbhajan was banned for 3 matches, as the BCCI threatened to leave the tour halfway, the sanctions were lifted. It had a lasting impact on Symonds as he himself said, "from that moment on that was my downhill slide."

IPL Champion

Two years after the incident in Sydney, Symonds was in South Africa playing for Deccan Chargers in the Indian Premier League. His all-round performance (33 runs & 2/18) in the final against RCB helped the Adam Gilchrist-led franchise win the title in South Africa. Later in 2011, he also played alongside Harbhajan Singh for Mumbai Indians.

CONTROVERSIES GALORE

Much like Warne, Symonds was a maverick in his own ways and time-to-time he kept making the news for the wrong reasons. Whether it's the 2005 drinking incident before the Bangladesh match or breaking drinking rules ahead of the 2009 T20 World Cup — post which he wasn't picked for Australia — the 46-year-old had his share of issues off the field, which only worsened after the Monkeygate incident in January 2008.

EXFILE • HEALTH

DOES YOUR CAT HAVE THE TOXOPLASMA PARASITE?

Toxoplasma gondii is probably the most successful parasite in the world today. This microscopic creature is capable of infecting any mammal or bird, and people across all continents are infected. So far, we don't have a drug that can eradicate the parasite from the body. And there is no vaccine approved for use in humans

30-50% OF PEOPLE

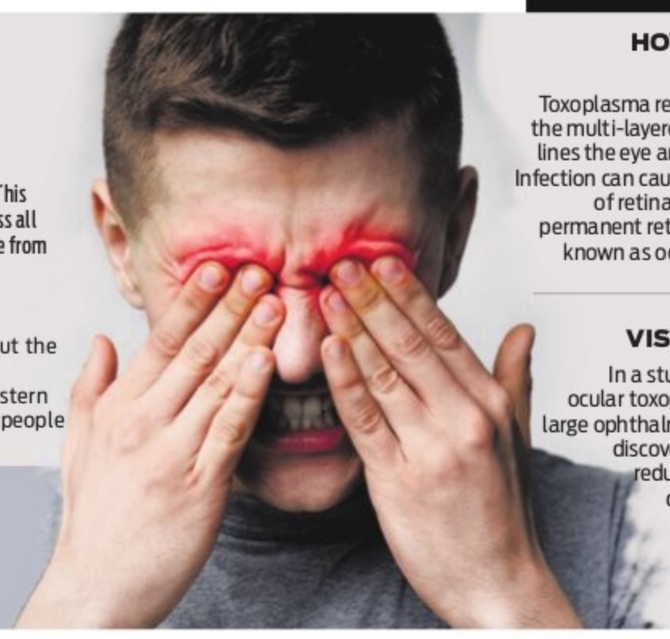
Across the world, it's estimated 30–50% of people are infected with Toxoplasma—and infections may be increasing in Australia

A survey of studies conducted at blood banks and pregnancy clinics across the country in the 1970s put the infection rate at 30%. However, a recent Western Australian community-based study found 66% of people were infected

66% INFECTED

EFFECTS OF THE DISEASE

The disease caused by this parasite can scar the back of the eye. New research looked for signs of disease in otherwise healthy people and found a significant number bore the mark of Toxoplasma

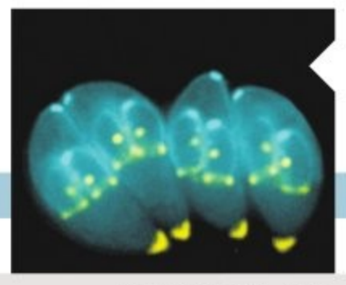


HOW IT AFFECTS THE EYE

Toxoplasma really likes the retina, the multi-layered nerve tissue that lines the eye and generates vision. Infection can cause recurring attacks of retinal inflammation and permanent retinal scarring. This is known as ocular toxoplasmosis

VISION BLURRED

In a study of patients with ocular toxoplasmosis seen at a large ophthalmology clinic, it was discovered that there was reduced vision to below driving level in more than 50% of eyes, and 25% of eyes were irreversibly blind



TOXOPLASMOSIS

While infection with Toxoplasma is extremely common, the most important health statistic is the rate of the disease caused by the infection, which is called toxoplasmosis

PRIMARY CARRIER OF THE DISEASE

The cat is the primary host for Toxoplasma. Cats catch the parasite when they eat infected prey

Then, for a couple of weeks, they pass large numbers of parasites in their faeces in a form that can survive for long periods in the environment, even during extreme weather

HOW DO WE TREAT THIS INFECTION?

To diagnose ocular toxoplasmosis, a retina examination is necessary, ideally with the pupils dilated. The retinal lesion is easy to spot, because of the way Toxoplasma activates retinal cells to produce certain proteins

STOPPING THE SPREAD

Toxoplasma infection is not curable, but it can be prevented. Fresh fruit and vegetables should be washed before eating, and drinking untreated water should be avoided

A NOBLE GOAL

The World Health Organization and other international and national health bodies are promoting an approach called One Health for diseases that cross humans, animals and their environments. This involves different sectors working together

China announces reopening of businesses

After lockdown, Shanghai vice mayor Chen Tong announced reopening in stages from May 16

HEALTH

SHANGHAI: Shanghai announced a gradual reopening from Monday of businesses, though it remains unclear when the millions of people still locked down in China's economic capital will finally be allowed out of their homes.

Confronted with its worst Covid-19 outbreak since the beginning of the pandemic, China—the last major economy still closed off to the world—put the city of 25 million under heavy restrictions in the month of April.

The rigid strategy to root out virus cases at all costs has wreaked havoc on supply chains, crushed small businesses and imperilled the country's economic goals. For many Shanghai residents, some of whom were already confined to their homes even before April, the frustrations have included problems with food supplies, access to non-Covid medical care and spartan quarantine centres, and many are venting their anger online.

Shanghai vice mayor Chen Tong on Sunday announced a reopening of businesses "in stages" from May 16. Chen however did not specify if he was referring to a gradual resumption of activity in the city or if it was conditional on certain health criteria.

Under China's zero-Covid strategy, any lifting of restrictions is generally conditional on seeing no new positive cases for three days, outside of quarantine centres.

Authorities in Shanghai were aiming for this goal by mid-May. Infections appear to be on the decline, with 1,369 new cases reported on Sunday in Shanghai, way down from more than 25,000 at the end of April.

In some areas of the city, however, restrictions have been tightened in recent days.

Some 1,200 kilometres (750 miles) north, residents of Beijing fear they could face a similar lockdown after more than a thousand cases were recorded in the capitalsince the end of April. Beijing has repeatedly tested its residents and locked down buildings with positive cases and closed metro stations and non-essential businesses in certain neighbourhoods.

In an attempt to curb the outbreak, Fangshan district in the southwest of Beijing, which has 1.3 million residents, suspended the services of taxis from Saturday.

Apart from a few neighbourhoods which are under restrictions, the vast majority of Beijing's 22 million inhabitants can still leave their homes. But many public places are closed and residents are forced to work from home, especially in the populous Chaoyang district, where many multinationals are based.

Recently China withdrew as the 2023 Asian Cup host due to the coronavirus. Chinese football officials had informed the governing body that they would not be able to host the 24-team competition, which was to be staged in 10 cities in June and July next year.

15 MORE SUSPECTED COVID-19 DEATHS IN NORTH KOREA

North Korea has confirmed 15 more deaths and hundreds of thousands of additional patients with fevers as it mobilizes more than a million health and other workers to try to suppress the country's first Covid-19 outbreak, state media reported Sunday. After maintaining a widely disputed claim that it's been coronavirus-free for more than two years, North Korea announced Thursday that it had found its first Covid-19 patients since the pandemic began. It said a fever has spread across the country "explosively" since late April but hasn't disclosed exactly how many Covid-19 cases were found. Some experts say North Korea lacks the diagnostic kits needed to test a large number of suspected Covid-19 patients. The additional deaths reported Sunday took the country's reported fever-related fatalities to 42.

Iraq's prized rice crop threatened by drought

ENVIRONMENT

AL-ABASSIYA: Drought is threatening the Iraqi tradition of growing amber rice, the aromatic basis of rich lamb and other dishes, and a key element in a struggling economy. The long-grained variety of rice takes its name from its distinctive scent, which is similar to that of amber resin. It is used in Iraqi meals including sumptuous lamb qouzi, mansaf and stuffed vegetables. But after three years of drought, Iraq's amber rice production will be only symbolic in 2022, forcing consumers to seek out imported varieties and leaving farmers pondering their future. "We live off this land," Abu Rassul says, standing near a small canal that in normal times irrigates his two hectares near Al-Abassiya village in Najaf.

"Since I was a child I have planted amber rice," says the farmer in his 70s. "Water enables us to plant every year." Except for this one. Normally, rice fields planted in mid-May should stay submerged all summer until October—but that's a luxury Iraq can no longer allow.

The available water reserves "are well below our critical level of 18 billion cubic metres", Shaker Fayez Kadhim, Najaf's water resources manager, said.

Govt. of Uttarakhand
Yamunotri
Gangotri
Kedarnath
Badrinath
CHARDHAM YATRA, AN ABODE OF FAITH
AND DEVOTION WELCOMES ALL ITS DEVOTEES
Narendra Modi
Prime Minister
ADVICE FOR ALL THE TRAVELERS OF CHARDHAM YATRA 2022
All the religious sites at Chardham Yatra are located at high altitude Himalayan areas, the heights of which are more than 2700 meter above the sea level. Due to this, the devotees might be affected by excessive cold, low humidity, excessive ultra violet radiation, low air pressure and low oxygen levels. Therefore, each of one of you need to adhere to the following instructions for a safe and convenient journey.
Start your journey only after health tests are done
People suffering from previous ailments are advised to carry the consultation papers along with the medicines and contact number of the doctor with them.
People with old age, previously affected by Covid or any other serious ailments should avoid the journey or should consider deferring the journey dates.
One day of rest is advised before reaching the pilgrimage site.
People are advised to carry warm and woolen clothes.
People affected by heart, respiratory, sugar or high blood pressure problems should take added precautions during the journey.
In case of symptoms like headache, spinning of head, fear bouts, increased heartbeats, nausea, hand and legs along with lips turning blue, feeling tired, breathlessness, coughing, or any other symptoms should reach the nearest health centre or call at helpline number 104
Avoid smoking or consuming liquor during journey
Apply sunscreen with SPF 50 to protect yourself from harmful sun rays
Wear sunglasses to protect against harmful UV rays.
Keep drinking water and eat food at regular intervals.
Take breaks between long walks.
Avoid exercising at high altitude areas.
Contact helpline numbers 104 for health and 108 for ambulance services
"In sync with the pious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, the gates for the revered Chardham Yatra in Devbhoomi were opened on 3rd of May this year. In the wake of this development, the government has taken an important step and will be taking more steps in the right direction to take care of the needs of the devotees. Keeping in mind the rising number of devotees and rush, I want to make an earnest appeal to all my dear devotes that they need to register themselves at https://registrationandtouristcare.uk.gov.in compulsorily before starting their journey to the pilgrimage site. In order to make your journey safe and memorable, the Uttarakhand Goverment has set a limit for travelers visiting daily. Therefore it is a sincere request for you to register yourselves and check for availability before embarking on the journey. The devotees should take special notice of the fact that elderly and children need to undergo required health tests as excessive heights, cold and low oxygen levels may lead to difficulty in breathing and heart problems leading to various inconveniences in the journey. I hereby request you all to cooperate with the authorities to make this journey a smoother one. We at Uttarakhand government are always committed to welcome and serve you at every step."
Pushkar Singh Dhami
Chief Minister, Uttarakhand
Information & Public Relations Department, Issued in Public Interest by Uttarakhand | uttarakhandtourism.gov.in
Helpline No. 0135-2559898, 2552627, 3520100, Toll Free No. 1364, Other Estates +91 135 1364, Time-7.00 AM to 9.00 PM

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16.05.2022
MONDAY

DAY'S DIARY

Historic feat

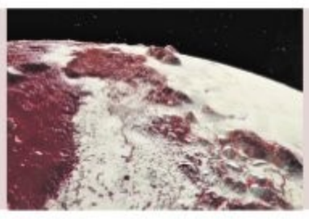
On this day in 1975, Junko Tabei from Japan, accompanied by Ang Tsering of Nepal, became the first woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest

NO MOUNTAIN LEFT BEHIND

Tabei, who stood 5 feet and weighed just 92 pounds, endured rigorous training and conquered treacherous ice and snow to reach the highest peaks in more than 70 nations

A LONG, TEDIOUS CLIMB

They reached the summit about five hours after leaving the camp of the Japanese women's expedition. Tabei was the deputy leader of the group



A LEGACY

She passed away at 77 with peritoneal cancer in 2016. In November 2019, a mountain range on Pluto was named in honour of her achievements

Director Suri on film Bad Manners

PG 4

PIC : NAGARAJA GADEKAL

'MY GRANDSON IS MY INSPIRATION'

Author Rohini Nilekani, who released her latest children's work, *The Great Rifasa*, speaks to *CE* about her bonhomie with books

Nature calling

Sangeetha Kadur, illustrator of *The Great Rifasa*, has always been a nature lover. "When it comes to children's books, there is liberty to bring in changes. Animals don't have to look perfect and I get to play around with the backgrounds," says Kadur, who has been illustrating realistic wildlife artwork for years. "The work for *The Great Rifasa* took two months. I had to bring in the elements from the Kabini forest to make it realistic. Incorporating details as little as the stripes on the tigers made the work interesting. Reading takes children onto a different journey and helps them imagine and explore places they haven't been to," she says.

ISHRATH MUBEEN

WRITER Rohini Nilekani is a doting grandma. And over the last five years, her grandson, Tanush, who has been the joy of her life has also been the inspiration for many of her books, including the latest one, *The Great Rifasa* (₹60).

Released on Sunday, young readers, accompanied by their parents, seated themselves on floor cushions at the quaint Champaca Bookstore to listen to adventurous stories on a jungle safari. "Tanush is obsessed with animals. Every time he says or does something interesting, I suddenly think that I need to write about it. I wrote *Hungry Little Sky Monster* (2020) and *The Great Rifasa* inspired by him," says the wife of Nandan Nilekani, co-founder, Infosys.

In her book, Nilekani narrates the story of animals in the Kabini forest who were 'heartbroken' by the absence of tourists and jeeps. "How many of you have been to a jungle safari?," asked Nilekani. To which only a few children raised their hands. Considering the pandemic, not surprisingly, most children had only seen animals on their screens. "Children always ask the darndest questions and have astonishing ideas. They say things you have never thought of," Nilekani says.

Most of Nilekani's books are under 1,500 words. "Kids take you to another space where you can drop off all the wrong things you've learnt as an adult and become a child again. Spending time with them is like meditation. They make sure you are in the moment," says Nilekani.

The co-founder of Pratham Books, Nilekani hopes to create more spaces for children to gather, read, and explore.

"Books help one understand the diversities of life and enhance curiosity. Childhood is incomplete without holding a book and reading it. Once a little one becomes a reader, there is no way the skill can be undone," says Nilekani, who is looking to her grandson for the idea of her next book.

> *Tanush is obsessed with animals. Every time he says or does something interesting, I think I need to write about it*
> — Rohini Nilekani, writer

Actor Deepika Padukone's recent appearance as a Louis Vuitton model is an affirmation that India is a key market for the luxury brand

'Deepika is incandescent at this point in her career'

ARGUABLY, the most beautiful woman in Bollywood, with the longest and most graceful limbs and super-talented to boot, Deepika Padukone occupies a rarefied space in the hallowed halls of Bollywood's finest. This is a position she's worked hard for, proving along the way that she has a finely-honed talent that simply shone in films like *Piku* and *Gehraiyaan*, elevating her to a position that is indisputably the number 1 slot in India's frenetic film industry.

Her recent appearance as a Louis Vuitton model, made her India's very first face to represent the brand at the LV Cruise show in San Diego. This is as much an affirmation of Deepika as a global superstar as it is of acknowledging that India has slowly and surely become an important market for LV. Surely the day is not far off when an Indian designer could be signed by LVMH to become a global brand. The new generation of Indian designers are moving beyond the bridal wear market to create an internationally appealing range of products using Indian textiles and techniques.

PRASAD BIDAPA
Fashion guru

Husband Ranveer Singh lost no time in complimenting his beautiful wife in an Instagram post where he remarked on her star power with a post that said, "Serious flex, baby @deepikapadukone." Deepika joins other famous faces like American actor Emma Stone and Chinese actor Zhou Dongyu as the brand ambassadors for this iconic label.

Deepika is incandescent at this point in her career. When most women actors start to fade away in their mid-30s in this hero-dominated and youth-driven industry, Deepika only shines brighter. Her trajectory will hopefully coincide with the emergence of more significant roles for women in their 30s and 40s, in an industry where women often make the transition from hero's love-interest to the hero's mother in a blink of an eye. Deepika has an interesting range of films releasing in the next few months — *Pathaan*, *Fighter* and *The Intern* will soon see theatrical releases! She has also been nominated to the Jury for the Cannes Film Festival, much to the envy of husband Ranveer who wonders when his turn will come.

Deepika Padukone

When most women actors start to fade away in their mid-30s in this hero-dominated and youth-driven industry, Deepika Padukone only shines brighter

RACING AHEAD

The weekend saw Yaduveer Wadiyar, the scion of erstwhile Mysuru royal family, lacing up for the TCS 10K Bengaluru 2022. Ahead of the race, Wadiyar participated in a pasta cookout where runners loaded on carbs; on Sunday, he completed the race in a little over an hour | SHRIRAM BN

Debolina Ray, a Bengaluru-based food & travel blogger who runs a blog called She Knows Grub, dishes out fun food-related trivia in this weekly series. So, answer these three questions and find out how much of a foodie you are

GRUB HUB

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

Send answers to **bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Food quiz'**

The correct answers and names of the first three respondents with right answers will be featured in *CE*. The first prize winner this week will win a complimentary voucher for two worth ₹750 from RNR Donne Biryani**

THE RIGHT ANSWERS

1) Patrode 2) Sandige 3) Raw mango

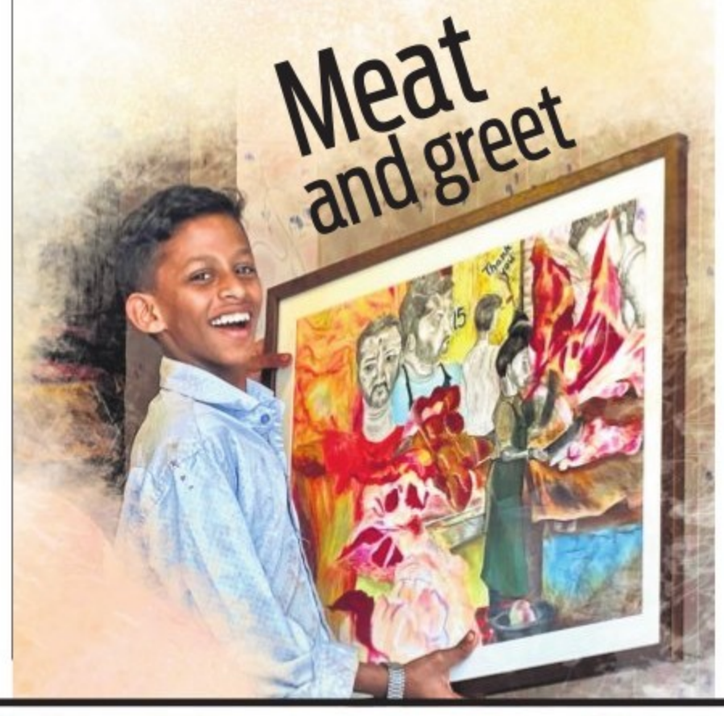
FIRST 3 TO GET IT RIGHT

1) Bharath Krishnan 2) Ganapathy 3) Suresh R

***Conditions apply**

This city-based artist is celebrating the meat vendors of Murphy Town through art

Meat and greet



ANILA KURIAN

FOUR months ago, **Maya Janine D'costa** was introduced to Murphy Town Meat Market in Ulsoor by a friend and was immediately taken in by their skills. The meat market comprises vendors who have been doing this generationally. The Mamsa Santhe, a collaborative project with the India Foundation of the Arts under Project 560 with the support from Sony Pictures Entertainment Fund, saw many come from near and far parts of the city to experience the art works done by D'costa and put up at each of the stalls.

"My friend who introduced me to the market preferred to buy meat from the vendors rather than from stores. They are cheaper and you get to choose the cuts. So, when I came here and heard their stories, I realised how much they have gone through and continue to go through with the many changes modernisation has brought about," says D'costa, the project coordinator, who has been given a grant of ₹25,000 for the project.

As part of phase 1, the artist wanted people to celebrate the neighbourhood market that is kept alive by the people.

"The market has survived a fire set by a mob, overnight demolition of a stone library that stood at its centre, the building of mini-malls and parking lots among other attempts towards privatisation in the name of development," she explains.

During these four months, D'costa built relationships with the vendors, took out her painting equipment and drew what she found interesting.

"They thought that I was painting them to make money out of it. But I just gifted it to them so they can have a memory of it. Those who visited the santhe would have seen the works hanging at their respective shops," she adds.

The santhe also saw vendors from within the area enter the market space to sell cooked food. D'costa says, "During these communal times, a santhe like this feels like a celebration. There are many vendors who want their children to study and move out of this business. It's challenging but they are also working as hard as they can and trying to secure the future for their children."

Though it's part of the artist's ongoing project, she hopes to revive this and more such markets and share their stories through art. "I am in talks with a few others who can help with the monetary aspects of running a santhe like this," she says hopefully.

WHAT WHEN WHY WHERE

BAKE THE CAKE

If you love baked goodies, join a fun and interactive baking session by chef Pooja and learn to make her favourite recipes.
When: May 17
Details: insider.in

DANCING BOOTS

Banjara Gypsy brings artist Chandrima Mandal who will teach you Bharatnatyam. Join this online workshop to learn basic techniques and build semi-classical choreographies. Put on your dancing shoes!
When: Ongoing
Details: bookmyshow.com

PAINTING TALES

Bombay Drawing Room conducts online fun and casual painting parties and workshops that will add some colour to your mundane routine. Grab your chance to express your thoughts through art and explore your creative side.
When: May 21 onwards **Where:** Open House Cafe, Kalyan Nagar
Details: bookmyshow.com

READ OUT LOUD

Filled with tales of strategy and deep psychology. Get ready to join Vikram Sridhar, a performance storyteller and Theatre Practitioner as he takes you on a journey around the world filled with laughter and memories.
When: May 21
Where: Lahe Lahe, Indiranagar
Details: insider.in

ARE YOU A TRAVEL ENTHUSIAST? THEN JOIN THE TEAM TO ADMIRE THE BEAUTY OF GOKARNA AND THE ALLURING SIGHTS TO BEHOLD. | WHEN: MAY 20 ONWARDS | DETAILS: BOOKMYSHOW.COM

The Summer Collection

The Summer Edition of The Handmade Collective by A Hundred Hands brings you a delightful bazaar of various artisans with old and new crafts ranging from tribal art and crafted jewellery to Jutties and weaves from across the country. Explore the uniqueness.
When: May 18 onwards **Where:** Woodlands Hotel, Richmond Town **Details:** 9880714405

DIY Cake

A fun learning day for kids where they can try their hands at baking some delicious cakes of their choice. Join the experts to learn some recipes, baking tricks and smart cooking tips. **When:** May 21
Where: Academy of Pastry & Culinary Arts **Details:** insider.in

Just Kiddin'

The entertainment factory presents 'Sunil Grover Live in Bangalore'. Come and get your dose of fun, rib-tickling jokes and a laughter-filled night. Catch your dose of comedy and laugh the loudest. **When:** May 21
Where: Forum Shantiniketan Mall, Whitefield
Details: insider.in

Literary Fest

Alliance School of Liberal Arts is hosting the inaugural edition of the two-day Alliance Literary Festival. Witness a gallery of speakers like Shashi Tharoor, Barkha Dutt, workshop on creative writing by Anita Nair, a stand-up comedy workshop by Preeti Das and much more. Join the biggest carnival.
When: May 20-21
Where: Alliance University, Anekal
Details: 8046199000

Laughter Therapy

Join Siddhartha Shetty, Salesman by day and a comic by the night, to turn your Sunday into a day of laughter therapy. Laugh until you hurt as you catch him perform live in the city with rib-tickling laughter session.
When: May 22
Where: Ministry Of Comedy, Koramangala
Details: bookmyshow.com

What's Brewing ?

Very often we get confused about which coffee we should experiment with next. Do you know that simply reading the coffee label can help narrow down your confusion? Join the workshop on 'How to read your coffee label'.
When: May 25 **Where:** Something's Brewing, Indiranagar **Details:** insider.in

QUICK FIX

What's cooking

IN YOUR KITCHEN?
We are hungry for recipes with minimum ingredients and maximum flavours. Share your quick-fix with us, along with step-by-step photos, at cityexpresschn@gmail.com.

STRAWBERRY BASIL MOJITO

INGREDIENTS
- **Strawberry crush:** 1/2 cup
- **Basil leaves (finely chopped):** 1/4 cup
- **Lemon slices:** 4
- **Salt:** 1/4 tsp
- **Sprite (chilled):** 2.5 cups
- **Ice cubes:** 5

— Karishma Rastogi, Delhi
(karishmakitchen.com)

METHOD
- Combine the crush, basil leaves, and lemon slices in a mortar. Add salt and muddle with a pestle.
- Transfer the mixture into a deep bowl. Add the Sprite and mix well.
- In a glass, add five ice cubes and pour the mixture in.
- Serve immediately.

FIT BIT

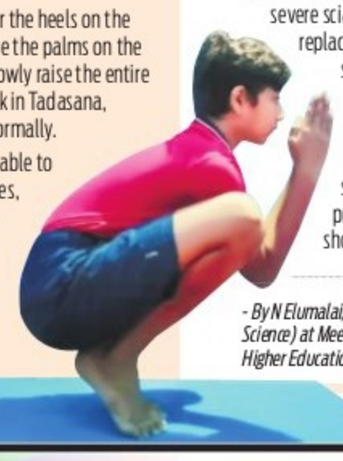
MALASANA ON TIPTOES
(GARLAND POSE ON TIPTOES)

This is a variation of Malasana (Garland Pose), with an additional action of balancing the pose on tiptoes. This brings awareness to the lower body and puts pressure on the involved joints and muscles. As a restorative pose, it helps release tension, tiredness, and heaviness in the feet and ankles. It can be included in the daily routine to keep the reproductive system healthy. The pose helps improve flexibility and strengthens the toes, ankles, knees, hips, and thighs, so holding on to the pose may be challenging.

STEPS
- Stand in Tadasana.
- Raise your spine and pull in the tummy, expanding the spine and shoulders upwards while taking a few breaths.
- Bring your palms together in Namaste close to the chest and expand the chest out.
- Inhale and as you exhale, bend your knees and sit with your feet flat and together.
- Bring your arms between your knees, elbows close to the inner thigh. Slowly push the upper arms deeper into your thighs and open the knees.
- Here, in Malasana, slowly raise the heels off the ground, tiptoe.
- Ensure the buttocks are close to the ankles for about six breaths.
- Inhale and exhale slowly. While exhaling, move the elbows deeper between the thighs and bring the straight spine and the lower back inwards.
- Inhale, lower the heels on the ground, place the palms on the floor, and slowly raise the entire body up back in Tadasana, breathing normally.
- If one is not able to sit on the toes, balance the body by placing the palms on the floor.

BENEFITS
- Helps strengthen hamstrings, feet, and ankles. Hips, thighs, knees, feet, and toes work together to engage the muscles and keep the body in balance.
- Ankles, toes, knees, and hips gain some stability and flexibility.
- Being aware of the muscles stretching, the joints flexing, and the breathing process helps the body stay stable and in balance.
- Helps energise the body and calm the mind. It calms the nerves, and overall, has an impact on the nervous system.
- Can be included in yoga for corporates, teens, working professionals, runners, athletes to help relax their feet and legs.

LIMITATIONS
- Those with injury in hip joints, knees, ankles, toes, or history of arthritis, weak bone density, severe sciatica, or hip replacement surgery should avoid this.
- Those who have undergone recent abdominal surgery and pregnant women should avoid this.



- By N Elumalai, PhD scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

SOUND BOARD

MY FAVORITE MURDER
True crime fanatics, Karen Kilgariff and Georgia Hardstark, share their favourite true crime stories and also discuss hometown crime stories that they gather from friends and family, just to make it a little more spooky.
On: Spotify

SYMPATHY PAINS
For 20 years, Sarah Delashmit told people around her that she had cancer, muscular dystrophy, and other illnesses. She used a wheelchair and posted selfies from a hospital bed. It was all a con. But unlike most scams, she didn't want money. She was after something far more valuable.
On: Apple Podcast

INVISIBILIA
Invisibilia explores all the unseen forces that affect our decisions and our beliefs. Episodes look at how two people can look at the same thing but see different realities and whether our personalities are constant over time.
On: Spotify

START WITH THIS
This is a podcast-cum-creativity playground designed to put your ideas in motion, from the co-creator of Welcome to Night Vale Jeffrey Cranor. Each episode centres around varied topics.
On: Spotify

DECODER RING
In each episode, television critic Willa Paskin examines a single object, habit or cultural question. The host then examines its history; and tries to figure out what it means and why it matters.
On: Apple Podcasts

POPULAR ON YOUTUBE

MILANA
Anjali's father forces her to marry Akash. Unable to forget her past, she demands a divorce from Akash, but soon begins to fall for him.
Cast: Puneeth Rajkumar, Parvathi Thiruvothu, Pooja Gandhi, Dileep Raj

MYNA
Satya falls for Mynaa, a woman with a physical disability, and marries her. But trouble begins when they meet a doctor who promises to help her but ends up taking her advantage.
Cast: Nithya Menon, Chetan Kumar, Anant Nag, Ajay

GEETHA
Geetha, a college student who suffers from a mysterious illness, meets Sanjay, a singer who performs at a charity concert in her college, and the two form a close bond.
Cast: Shankar Nag, KS Aswanth, Ramesh Bhat, Tiger Prabhakar

BRAHMACHARI
Ramu, a follower of Lord Rama's ideals, and Sunitha, a writer, become friends and eventually marry. The two face issues when Ramu is unable to perform sexually.
Cast: Aditi Prabhudeva, Sathish Ninasam, Padmaja Rao, Achyuth Kumar

EXCUSE ME
Ajay, a musician, and his Casanova friend Sunil move to Bengaluru with different goals. Soon, Sunil pretends to be Ajay in order to impress Madhu, a girl who is passionate about music.
Cast: Sunil Raoh, Ajay Rao, Divya Spandana, Ramesh Bhat

WHAT'S ON TED TALKS

1 THE ART OF THE ECO-MIND SHIFT
BY NATALIE JEREMIJENKO
Natalie Jeremijenko's unusual lab puts art to work, and addresses environmental woes by combining engineering know-how with public art and a team of volunteers. These real-life experiments include: Walking tadpoles, texting "fish," planting fire-hydrant gardens and more.

2 USING YOUR VOICE IS A POLITICAL CHOICE
BY AMANDA GORMAN
For anyone who believes poetry is stuffy or elitist, Amanda Gorman — the youngest inaugural poet in US history — has some characteristically well-chosen words. In this fierce talk and performance, she explains why poetry is inherently political, pays homage to her honorary ancestors and stresses the value of speaking out despite your fears.

3 ARE YOU A GIVER OR A TAKER BY ADAM GRANT
In every workplace, there are three basic kinds of people: givers, takers and matchers. Organisational psychologist Adam Grant breaks down these personalities and offers simple strategies to promote a culture of generosity and keep self-serving employees from taking more than their share.

4 WHY OUR SCREENS MAKE US LESS HAPPY BY ADAM ALTER
Psychologist Adam Alter studies how much time screens steal from us and how they're getting away with it. He shares why all those hours you spend staring at your smartphone, tablet or computer might be making you miserable — and what you can do about it.

5 HOW WE CAN MAKE RACISM A SOLVABLE PROBLEM AND IMPROVE POLICING
BY DR. PHILLIP ATIBA GOFFEPLER
In an actionable talk, justice scientist Dr Phillip Atiba Goff shares his work at the Center for Policing Equity, an organisation that helps police departments diagnose and track racial gaps in policing in order to eliminate them. Learn more about their data-driven approach.

NOW STREAMING

REGIONAL

ARCHANA 31 NOT OUT (Malayalam)
After 31 failed marriage proposals, Archana finds the perfect groom in Prasad, who has a job abroad. However, the night before the wedding, Archana receives a phone call that changes her life.
Cast: Aishwarya Lekshmi, Anju Joseph, Rajesh Madhavan
- **Watch on:** Amazon Prime Video

PUZHU
(Malayalam)
A gripping thriller with focus on the relationship between a father and son, and the underlying family dynamics followed by trust issues.
Cast: Mammootty, Parvathy Thiruvothu, Nayan Rosh T M
- **Watch on:** Sony LIV

BADAVA RASCAL (Kannada)
Shankar, a young man, is kidnapped by a gang of thugs. However, to escape his predicament, he narrates his life story to make his abductors rethink their decisions.
Cast: Amrutha Iyengar, Dhananjay, Nagabhushar
- **Watch on:** Voot

OH MY DOG (Tamil)
Young Arjun rescues a blind Siberian Husky puppy and decides to train him for a competition, with his father and grandfather.
Cast: Arun Vijay, Mahima Nambiar, Vinay Rai
- **Watch on:** Amazon Prime Video

KHILADI (Telugu)
A murder suspect escapes police custody due to criminologist Priya's misjudgement. Priya, along with Arjun, solves the mystery around the murder and the money laundering which lead to the crime.
Cast: Ravi Teja, Arjun Sarja, Unni Mukundan
- **Watch on:** Disney+Hotstar

All the streaming apps can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs with Internet connection.

BADHAAI DO (Hindi)
Instead of coming out to their families, a gay man and a lesbian enter into a marriage of convenience. However, chaos ensues when the woman's girlfriend comes to live with them.
Cast: Bhumi Pednekar, Rajkumar Rao, Chum Darang
- **Watch on:** Netflix

PRAWAAS (Marathi)
When his kidneys fail to function, a 65-year-old retiree finds himself on a path which takes him on a unique journey with his wife.
Cast: Ashok Saraf, Padmini Kolhapure, Shashank Udapurkar
- **Watch on:** Amazon prime Video

FOREIGN

THE 7 LIVES OF LEA (French)
After finding a young man's remains, Léa wakes up in the 1990s and body swaps seven times as she tries to solve the mystery of his death — and prevent it.
Cast: Marguerite Thiam, Alexander Ferrario
- **Watch on:** Netflix

THE TAKEDOWN (English)
Ousmane and François are two cops with very different styles. The unlikely pair are reunited once again for a new investigation. What seemed to be a simple drug deal turns out to be a high-scale criminal case wrapped in danger.
Cast: Omar Sy, Izia, Laurent Lafitte
- **Watch on:** Netflix

SAMURAI RABBIT: THE USAGI CHRONICLES (English)
A teenage rabbit, eager to become a true samurai, teams up with his warrior friends to protect their city from monsters, ninjas and evil aliens.
Cast: Darren Barnet, Aleks Le
- **Watch on:** Netflix

THE ADAM PROJECT (English)
After accidentally crash-landing in 2022, time-traveling fighter pilot Adam Reed teams up with his 12-year-old self for a mission to save the future.
Cast: Ryan Reynolds, Walker Scobell
- **Watch on:** Netflix

SUBSCRIPTION
Disney+Hotstar: ₹ 499 per year
Apple TV: ₹ 99 per month
Prime Video: ₹ 179 per month
Netflix: ₹ 149 per month

Amy Schumer and Jennifer Lawrence at the protest regarding the abortion rights

As thousands are debating the abortion rights across the US, Americans in Bengaluru share their thoughts on the controversial bill

Fight for rights

EXPRESS FEATURES

REBECCA Hillman has been in Bengaluru for 12 years but she is keenly watching the goings-on in the United States of America, her home country.

The debate on the Abortion Bill is something she has been following closely. As thousands are rallying and debating the abortion rights across the US, a displeased Hillman, who hails from Massachusetts, says, "As women, we have the Constitutional right to privacy, and the choices of our body. If men have those, why can't women?"

Nicholas Tomkins feels strongly about this debate since he feels anti-abortion sentiments are driven primarily by religious viewpoints. "The US Constitution clearly separates the church and the state. I don't think there are any negatives associated with women wanting to do what they want. It is especially important in case of rape and incest," says Tomkins.

Augustine Colebrook

Rebecca Hillman

Nicholas Tomkins

Agrees Augustine Colebrook, an expert in maternity care and a nationally-certified professional midwife.

"I have been counselling pregnant women for 25 years and I can speak for patients I cared about for years. Abortion is health care and health care is a human right. The new conflict we are in is a truly human rights violation," says Colebrook, who has been in the city for over a year.

According to Colebrook (45), who hails from Colorado, one has to understand American politics closely to know the reason behind the defeat of the bill.

"When Trump took charge, he was the head of the Republican party which has long opposed abortion," says Colebrook, adding, "During (Donald) Trump's reign, he pushed as hard as he could to appoint three justices who are conservative. Even if we are in the (Joe) Biden era of presidency, we are seeing the effect of the previous regime. This move is going to affect marginalised communities."

Spring cleansing

PAIRED WITH PANACHE
Anuja Pandey

(The author is social media influencer @loftyspectrums and lifestyle coach)

IF you think you are a goddess, then don't forget that your body is a temple and it is you who must worship it. Ayurveda is a combination of health, wellness and consequently, beauty. Ayurveda has tricks to keep your hair and skin beaming.

Body care is as important as our facial and scalp skin. To remove the build up of comedones that clog pores of skin and follicles, it is important to exfoliate, scrub and invest your time in rituals relating to body grooming. And it is necessary to moisturise the body to absorb the nourishment from age-old recipes that come from flowers, roots and secret ingredients. Coconut oil enriches the skin with vitamin E and lauric acid, leaving it glowing radiant. Sesame oil keeps the skin supple while maintaining its elasticity.

The ritual bath of a bride always includes ubtan, an oil bath which is then followed by cleansers. Similarly, hair packs and oil are applied, cleansed and finally soaked in with the smoky aromas of various flowers that bring in a sensuous feel when you soak in the glory of your beauty.

What is the importance of aroma for wellness? When you enter your home after a tiring day and you are welcomed by the aromas of rose, the stress fades away. The aromatic ingredients are therapy to the mind and body, and impart wellness. Let us see how:

Lavender relaxes the nerves and alleviates anxiety. It is associated with healing and calming energies. Vedix has launched its customised body care range of eight products in two fragrances — lavender and kesar. Lavender oil is a blend of cold-pressed herbal oils.

Pure elaichi and Jatamansi oil to soothe the skin, udumbar, vata and peepal oils nourish and promote healing and repair. Sesame oil strengthens the skin, making it toned and taut, while the nourishing coconut oil softens the texture. Jatin Gujrati, business head, Vedix says, "Face and hair care are often prioritised, owing to the attention they get. But having an effective body care routine is neglected. Having a routine helps the skin remain firm. While the skin remains immune to diseases, pollution and environmental stress, indulgent self-care fortifies mental health."

He adds kesar is associated with invigorating energies. "If it is used in body oil along with hemp, Ylang Ylang and Myrrh, then these oils tone the skin, promote circulation and keep the skin youthful," he says.

When we put in place a beauty or wellness regime, it's integral to have an all-encompassing approach towards hair, skin and body.

ARE YOU GAME?
Anusha Ganapathi
@quofles

(This economics graduate spends her leisure time preparing for the zombie apocalypse)

Beware of the Bergson family

Children of Morta is the story of the Bergson family. There are nine people in the house. You would not like the Bergsons as your neighbours. John keeps waving his sword and shield around. Linda is alright at singing, but I would best keep a distance because her arrows are sharp. I thought Lucy was quiet and happy in her corner, but then she throws fireballs. I wouldn't trust Kevin unless his knives are in sight. If you can't see the knives it means you've already received a hit. I would not take any of Grandma Margaret's cookies if she offers them — she spends too much time in the alchemy room. Quirks aside, you still wouldn't want to be a neighbour of the Bergsons. They use their powers for the good, to protect Mount Morta from the ever-expanding corruption. Now who would want to be the underachieving, overlooked house in the neighbourhood.

Children of Morta is a rogue-lite game. Each level involves numerous dungeons, procedurally generated — so they look different every time you re-enter them. It is 'lite' because you don't lose everything when you die in the game. We carry over experience points, skills, and coins over to the next level. As an RPG, Morta allows for a lot of variety in its combat, because we can play as any of the Bergson children. I want to appreciate the animators here. It might seem like a small addition, but the level of detail provided to the combat movements — it makes my heart sing to watch the monsters being blasted into nothingness.

The Bergson household cutscenes are its own high-fantasy reality show, and I am here for it. It's almost worth staying alive for just one additional level, and then promptly dying. Because every time we progress a little further into the dungeons, a new cutscenes unlocks. Now there comes a point in the game, where the levels begin to get a little too difficult. Normally, this would call for the dullest part of a rogue-lite game — the grind. That means leveling up the individual characters, unlocking skills, gaining gold, and hoping to get some lucky power drops. Although easy, this is time-consuming.

But if you are looking to play Children of Morta - there is no better time to start. The PC version of the game has now enabled co-op. The difficult levels will get easier — and perhaps more fun with a friend around.

I rate the game 7/9 for the consistently interesting Bergson family life stories.

SPACE STORIES

EXPRESS FEATURES

THE Indo-French deep space technology is all set to mitigate climate change in the coming years. At a talk 'Indo-French Space Collaboration: From Past to Future', organised by Bonjour India at the Bangalore International Centre recently, Dr Umamaheswaran R, director, Human Space Flight Centre, ISRO, said that the collaboration between ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) and CNES (The National Centre for Space Studies) is a unique one. "We are well-adapted with the launch vehicle and spacecraft. But a few areas related to technology are fresh to us, like the environmental control system. And we are doing quite well with it," he said.

A student in the audience was curious about how deep space knowledge and technology can help fight climate change. Dr Jacques Arnould, Ethics Advisor, French Space Agency, National Centre for Space Studies, explained that the reports from the satellites are being studied extensively to mitigate it.

Arnould also said that curiosity is the very nature of every living being. "But unlike animals, humans have the ability to imagine. When curiosity and imagination exist together, exploration happens. Be it beyond the borders, or space," he said.

CITY READ

Panel discussion on museum and impact of public art to be held

RMZ Foundation as host partner with National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Bengaluru is organising a panel discussion on 'The Power of the Museum and the Impact of Public Art' on the occasion of International Museum Day on May 18 at NGMA Auditorium, Manikyavelu Mansion, Palace Road, at 6 pm. The panel includes contemporary artists Arunkumar HG and LN Tallur, artist and curator Dr Subodh Kerkar, art historian Jayaram Poduval and eminent artist Prof MJ Kamalakshi.

The Last Poem, a photography exhibition of clicks by Dr Ranganath KS, will be held starting today; show is compiled by Ranganath's friends and family

Fond memories

EXPRESS FEATURES

Dr Ranganath KS

IT'S your work that stays even after you are dead, they say. And we can clearly see it happening in Dr Ranganath KS's case, who passed away in 2021 due to Covid. The Last Poem, a photography exhibition of the clicks by Ranganath, will be held at the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, from May 16. The exhibition has been compiled by Ranganath's friends and family. Ranganath was not only an award-winning photographer and artist, but also a professor in fine arts.

Ranganath mostly specialised in black and white photography and preferred the analog method. Ravikumar Kashi, who is currently a professor at Chitrakala Parishath, was also Ranganath's classmate, and is one of the organisers of the show. "We studied and grew up together. He was a very good photographer. He was into black and white photography and won many state awards. This is going to be a comprehensive show on various themes and aspects of photography that he worked on. He developed his own films," says Kashi, adding that the technique itself is going out of practice now.

Kashi adds that the show is tribute to Ranganath and his love for photography as an artform. "He had gifted his work to friends and family which we have collected. He followed several themes and was also into nature and people photography. There's also an empty chair, which is a metaphor for loss. He had an unusual way of picking his themes," says Kashi. This exhibition has been organised by the alumni association of Chitrakala Praishath. "We are also planning a memorial lecture too," Kashi adds.

Many might remember Ranaganath as an "amazing photographer" but for Kashi he is an old friend who was full of life. "He was very generous and energetic. He really pushed his students to do good work and took a lot of pride in their work," says Kashi.

Dr Ranganath had gifted his work to friends and family which we have collected. He followed several themes and was also into nature and people photography

-Ravikumar Kashi, professor, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath

(The Last Poem, a show of photographs by Dr Ranganath KS will be exhibited at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Kumara Krupa Road, from May 16-22)

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS **CLASSIFIEDS**

CHANGE OF NAME
I, (OLD NAME) ZIAUDDIN IBRAHIM KHALEEL, Resident of No. 41, Near Kensri School, Dynasty Layout, Mariyamma Palya, Bangalore-560024, have changed my name from **(OLD NAME) ZIAUDDIN IBRAHIM KHALEEL** to **(NEW NAME) IBRAHIM KHALEEL** vide affidavit Dated 13/05/2022 sworn before Notary N.Nagappa, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SHLOK BHANSALI,** S/o. Ramesh Kumar, resident at No. 8, 14th Cross, Kilari Road, Bengaluru - 560 053, hereby declare that I have changed my name from **SHLOK** to **SHLOK BHANSALI,** vide affidavit dated 13.05.2022, sworn before L. Shankaranarayana, Advocate & Notary, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **VIDYALAKSHMI SANDESH BHAT** W/o **Sandesh Sundara Bhat** R/at No.309, Oakwood Apartment, Next To Banjara Arch, Horamavu, Bengaluru-560043 have changed my name to **VIDYA LAKSHMI** vide affidavit dated: 14/5/2022 Before Notary **M.K.Devaki** Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, (OLD NAME) ABDUL RAHMAN also Known as **SYED ELIAS,** residing at No. 145, 6th Cross, Williams Town Near Banhur High School, Bangalore-560046, have changed my name from **(OLD NAME) ABDUL RAHMAN** also Known as **SYED ELIAS** to **(NEW NAME) S.ILYAS** vide affidavit Date 13/05/2022 sworn before Notary N.Nagappa, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **HEENA JAIN,** W/o. Kalpesh Jain, resident at No. 105, Rishab Residency, No. 20, A P S Road, V.V. Puram, Bengaluru - 560 004, hereby declare that I have changed my name from **JAIN HEENAKUMARI MAHENDRAKUMAR** to **HEENA JAIN,** vide affidavit dated 13.05.2022, sworn before L. Shankaranarayana, Advocate & Notary, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I BEEDAPPA SWAPNA aged 32 years D/o BEEDAPPAGARI SIVA REDDY Residing at No 5, 16th cross Bhuvaneswari Nagar, Hebbal, Bangalore 560024. Have changed my name as **BEEDAPPAGARI SWAPNA REDDY** vide affidavit dated 13th May 2022. Sworn before notary SIVAKUMARA. M.N, RT NAGAR POST, BANGALORE 560032

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Smt, B.S. Bhagirathamma,** aged about 47 years, W/o. Mr. S. Prakash, Residing at No.12, Nagappa Street, 5th Main, 5th Cross, Palace Guttahalli, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru - 560 003, have changed my name to **B.S. BHAGIRATHI,** vide affidavit dated 08.06.2020 before Notary C.R. Jayachandra Shetty, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **ARYAMOL. E. G. & ARYAMOL EDAVAKKEDATH GOPALAKRISHNAN** D/o **Gopalakrishnan. E. K.,** Permanently R/at Edavakkedathu, Kattappana South, Idukki- Kerala- 685515, & now R/at Flat No.202, Gitanjali Lake View Apartment, Benniganahalli, Byapapanahalli, Bengaluru- 560016, have changed my name to **ARYA KRISHNA** vide affidavit dated: 14/5/2022 Before Notary **Shaik Mahaboob** Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Dhrithirhuth Rajanna** S/o Rajanna, aged about 23 years. Residing at No. 20/A, Yelachenahalli, Post Office Road, Near Flora Convent, Bengaluru - 560078 have changed my name as **Dhruthirhuth Rajanna** only, vide affidavit dated: 13-05-2022, sworn before Notary **Mamatha. N.K,** Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **PADMA MANJUNATH,** W/o Sri K. Manjunath, aged about 42 years, resident of No. 210, Mythri Garndeur, 16th Main, MICO Layout, St. Francis School, Hongasandra, Bommanahalli, Bengaluru South, Bengaluru - 560 068, hereby declare that I have changed my name from **PADMAVATHI RUDRAPPA BAREYENKALA** to **PADMA MANJUNATH,** vide affidavit dated 13.05.2022, sworn before Anitha Bai, Advocate & Notary, Bengaluru,

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SHARADA** W/o **H.R.Prakash,** R/at No.398, Ground Floor, Radha Nilaya, 17th Main, Near Shanthi Upahara, 4th D Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore-560041 have changed my name to **SHARADA.S** vide affidavit dated: 13/5/2022 Before Notary **L. Puttaraju** Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SUZANNAH RUTH FRANCIS,** W/o Jeremy Sunil Arthur, R/of Flat #313, 3rd Floor, Gopalan Gardenia Apartments, #37/1, Hosur Road, Attibele Hobli, Bengaluru-560100, have changed my name to **SUZANNAH RUTH ARTHUR,** vide affidavit dated 13-05-2022 before Notary **S. RAMESH,** Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Maria Joseph Jesudian** S/o S. Francis, Retired and presently residing at : No. 92, 3rd Main Road, T.C. Palya Main Road, Anandapura, Krishnarajapuram, Bangalore -560036, I have changed my name from Francis Maria Joseph to **MARIA JOSEPH JESUDIAN (NEW NAME),** vide affidavit dated **13.05.2022** sworn in before **S. Subashini, Advocate & Notary, Bengaluru.**

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I CHANGED MY SHOOTING PROCESS FOR *BAD MANNERS*: SURI

The director talks about the film's progress and actor Abishek Ambareesh

Abishek Ambareesh

CE FEATURES

DIRECTOR Suri's *Bad Manners*, starring Abishek Ambareesh, is in the last leg of the shooting. The crew will start the last schedule on May 26, which encompasses a pending song shoot. "Shooting the film with nature and natural light and getting the right kind of performances takes time. It's the case with *Bad Manners*," says Suri. Suri speaks to *CE* about the film's progress, actor Abishek, and more.

"We have not followed the regular shooting process, and that's why it's taking time. The film is more special because I have writers Surendra Nath and Amri taking care of the film's screenplay. With some out-of-the-box dialogues penned by Maasti and Shekar's cinematography, the film has shaped well in a way I had visualised."

Talking about Abishek, Suri says, "Abi has worked in *Amar*, but he properly got introduced to me with *Bad Manners*. On the sets, whenever I spoke to him, I would sense Ambareesh in his voice and eyes. The audience will also feel the same way, I hope. On many occasions on the sets, Abishek was applauded for his performance, and he is very dedicated." Abishek will be seen in three shades in different timelines.

The film also has Priyanka Kumar and Rachita Ram playing the female leads. The film is about the thin line between being good and bad, says the director.

The release date of the film, backed by Sudhir KM, will be announced soon. The film's music is scored by Charan Raj.

The director's next

Suri's next is Kadana Virama, which is currently in the scripting stage. "It will be a big project starring a big star. Our current focus is on the writing; after which we will decide on the cast. Post this project, I will take up my other pending project, *Kaage Bangara*," he says.

Director Suri

A still from KGF Chapter 2

KGF Chapter 2 is a huge boost to Kannada industry: Suri

Suri was also in praise of *KGF Chapter 2* during his chat with CE. "In between my busy schedule, I watched Yash-starrer KGF Chapter 2, and I was completely awed by Prashanth Neel's vision - especially the way he has connected both the parts and how he wholeheartedly connects the audience to the KGF world. Today, the film is a hit across the globe and has entered the Rs 1000-crore-club, which is a proud moment for Sandalwood and Indian cinema," explains Suri."This tremendous success of KGF Chapter 2 has opened many doors," says Suri. "The Sandalwood industry, apart from star films, is usually known to make low-budget movies with a budget of ₹ 10 crores. Today, it is a happy feeling to learn producers are ready to make a Kannada film for ₹ 50 crore. I consider this a milestone, and all the credit goes to Yash, Neel, and the producer Vijay Kiragandur."

Rappers Chandan Shetty and All Ok team up for Kaaneyadavara Bagge Prakatane

CE FEATURES

TWO well-known Kannada rap singers -Chandan Shetty and All Ok - team up for Anil Kumar's *Kaaneyadavara Bagge Prakatane*. The film features senior actors -- Rangayana Raghu, Tabla Nani, and Ravi Shankar -- in the lead roles and Chikkanna in a pivotal role. The two singers have rendered their voices to a peppy song. Titled *Bang Bang Bangkok*, the song has gone viral on social media.

Anil Kumar has conceived a subject on human values. The film, set in the 50s, has crucial portions shot in Bangkok and Pattaya. Currently, in the process of censoring, the film is set to hit the theatres on May 27. *Kaaneyadavara Bagge Prakatane*, backed by Naveen Kumar, has music scored by Arjun Janya. Shivakumar B K, who has worked as the cinematographer for Anil Kumar's *Shiva 143*, has handled the camera work for this film.

A still from the film

Chandan Shetty and All OK

Sathish Ninasam to headline *Ashoka Blade*

Sathish Ninasam

CE FEATURES

BASED on a real incident, the film is set in the 70s and 80s. The story is penned by T K Dayanand and will mark the directorial debut of Vinod V Dhondalay

Sathish Ninasam to headline a retro film, titled *Ashoka Blade*. The project commenced on Sunday with the release of a poster. The film's story, written by T K Dayanand (of *Bell Bottom* fame), is also working on the screenplay. The film will have Vinod V Dhondalay marking his directorial debut, who has an experience of 20 years in various Kannada projects.

Based on a real incident, *Ashoka Blade* is set in the 70s and 80s. The film will feature Sathish as someone fighting for a community and will be sporting four different looks in the film. The film will pan through his different stages of life - youth (25), middle-age (35), and old age (70).

The entire shooting will take place in the locations of Chamarajnagar and Nanjangud. *Ashoka Blade*, backed by Vriddhi Creations and Sathish Pictures, will have music scored by Poornachandra Tejaswi and cinematography by Lavith. The film features Kavya Shetty in a prominent role, and the team is in the process of finalising the heroine and other supporting actors.

AR RAHMAN'S DEBUT FILM *LE MUSK* TO PREMIERE AT CANNES XR

CE FEATURES

GRAMMY-winning Indian composer AR Rahman's first feature film *Le Musk* will have its world premiere at the Cannes Film Market's Cannes XR programme. The 36-minute film is billed as a cinematic sensory experience incorporating virtual reality, with motion, music, and scent integrated into the narrative. It follows heiress and musician Juliet Merdinian, who, 20 years since she was orphaned, seeks out the men who changed her destiny with one powerful memory — that of their scent.

Rahman developed the story from an original idea by his wife Saira. They share a love for perfume and wished to employ scent as a narrative device in immersive cinema. Rahman directed from a screenplay by Gurachi Phoenix, besides composing the score.

"Le Musk has been several years in the making with collaborators worldwide; we've aimed to create an unprecedented, subtle sensory cinematic surrealism. Creating a feature-length cinema VR experience that pushes the boundaries of storytelling and incorporates multiple senses was a guiding force for me. Aroma and music together bring warm memories subjectively for the audience," Rahman said.

The cast includes Nora Arnezeder and Guy Burnet in lead roles, alongside Munirih Grace and Mariam Zohrabyan.

"Working on the VR experience Le Musk under director Rahman has been a beautiful journey where we found new artistic expression. Through Le Musk, we've unlocked a new, expansive frontier in storytelling where we hope to inspire and inquire through the senses. This film is an experience unlike any other," said Arnezeder.

Shot in Rome, *Le Musk* features inter-disciplinary expertise coming together from around the world. It was shot on 14 different cameras capturing super-resolution quality video. Post-produced in stereoscopic 360 VR workflow at higher resolution and frame rate, Le Musk was finished by 10 VFX houses from around the world with close to a petabyte of data.

Thanks to a partnership with the Cannes Film Market and Cannes XR, Le Musk can be experienced at the immersive VR chair by Los Angeles-based company Positron, which has motion, scent, immersive sound, and haptics integrated. "Imagined with Intel and partners, the creative genesis of the film heralds a new frontier for new-age immersive storytellers like A.R. Rahman," added Ravindra Velhal, global content technologist, Intel Corporation, and executive producer and VR technology director of Le Musk.

"The film has state-of-the-art technology meeting the storyteller to push the boundaries of immersive cinema. With motion, music, and scent integrated into the narrative, making it an unparalleled immersive VR cinema of its era - in ways you've never experienced before."

The film is produced by Rahman's ARR Studios with Ideal Entertainment and Intel as co-producers and Thenandal Studio and Palani Andavar Holdings as associate producers. Cannes XR is a programme from the Cannes Film Market dedicated to immersive technologies and cinematographic content.

A R Rahman

Reacher star Alan Ritchson on board *Fast X*

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IT has been announced that Alan Ritchson, the breakout star of Amazon Prime Video's Reacher has joined the cast of *Fast X*.

His role in the action film franchise is currently under wraps. Ritchson will be joining franchise regulars such as Vin Diesel, Michelle Rodriguez, Tyrese Gibson, Chris "Ludacris" Bridges, Jordana Brewster, and Nathalie Emmanuel in the tenth instalment.

It was rewcently announced that Louis Letterier had replaced Justin Lin as the director after the latter walked out of the project. Lin, however, will be attached to the film as the producer. The film is currently under production.